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[NORMA'S CHARGE.]

THE FOOT TICKLER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Evelyn's Plot," "Darcy's Child," "One Sparkle of Gold," &c., &c.

CHAPTER X.

He goes from the place, but evil eyes
Are a watch in the thicker shades—
For she was lovely that smiled on his sighs,
And he bore from a hundred lovers his prize,
The pride of the forest maids.

THERE was a peculiar look in the face of the handsome Southern page as he stood with his large dark eyes riveted on his beautiful mistress that arrested the reproof which hovered on her lips.

There was a passionate worship, if the expression may be used, in his glowing features, a sharp keenness in his dazzling eyes, which was all foreign to his position or rank in the household, and which was yet redeemed from one tinge of insolence by the romantic and peculiar style that distinguished him from his class.

And even Celia's haughty spirit, bowed and humiliated as it was by the recent interview, could not resent, as she otherwise would have done, the intrusion and the inquisitorial gaze of that favoured domestic slave by a cold and yet faltering:

"What does this mean? I did not send for you, Carlos," she said, in a voice of constrained composure.

"No, but I thought you might want me," he said, with unmoved calmness; "and I am only waiting for your orders, senorita."

There was a meaning in the tone that did not altogether comport with the apparently simple words, and Celia felt an irresistible impulse to test the reality of her suspicions.

"I have never had any reason to doubt your obedience or your fidelity, Carlos, but you might have been sure I should have sent for you if I had any orders to give you. Of course," she added, as he half turned away from her in disappointment, "you conducted Mr. Herries in safety to the gates?"

"Yes, senorita, but perhaps it might be as well if he did not find it safe to return," was the significant reply.

Miss Vyvian darted one quick glance at the daring speaker.

"Carlos, surely you forget yourself to speak thus of a friend of mine."

"Of a friend, senorita," replied the page, quickly. "Then I mistook—I thought that man was your enemy, and your enemies are mine."

The deep tone, the passionate look, the clasped hands, more than endorsed the words.

And Celia was in no mood to refuse devoted and unscrupulous services.

"Could I really depend on your zeal in case I had occasion to put it to the test, Carlos?" she asked, in a low tone.

"To the death," he repeated; "yes, of myself, or of others. There could be but one thing that would turn me from your service or restrain me from spending my life in executing your commands, noble lady."

"And what is that?" she asked.

"If you were to spurn my devotion, to look coldly on my services," he replied, resolutely.

Celia perhaps scarcely even dreamt of the possibility that the humble domestic dared to entertain the wildest idea of aught but respectful devotion to the high-born lady of the Rookery.

Yet there was a flash in the page's full, deep brown eyes that might have almost warranted such a suspicion.

"You need never fear I should be ungrateful or unmindful of your services, Carlos," she replied, gently. "And, it may be, I might need to put you to the proof."

"Have you not need now?" he asked, significantly.

"Senorita, I hate that man, and I do not think you love him," he added, with a significant smile.

"And if not, what then?" she asked.

"Did I not say your enemies were mine, lady?" he returned. "That is enough. If you tell me so, he shall not trouble you more."

"Carlos, you are raving. You would not murder

him?" said Celia, in a tone that involuntarily shook with the horror of the idea—or, it might be, with eager excitement at its very proposal.

"I would keep him from giving you one moment's pain or fear," he replied, resolutely. "It is of little consequence to me how it might be necessary to accomplish it."

Celia Vyvian's very soul sprang forth at this outbreak of a spirit that at once resembled her own and might so powerfully save her from the one great terror of her richly endowed life.

It was a chance not to be thrown away, even at the expense of some present risk and humiliation.

"Carlos, I have few friends—perhaps I should say none. Admirers, flatterers, sycophants there are—but friends, none," she returned, with a most bewitching softness.

"And you would believe in, trust me?" he said, clasping his hands. "But what of him—the suitor, the affianced husband? Surely he is your friend, lady?" he added, as if stung by a sudden idea that struck a pang to his heart's core.

"Perhaps," she said, carelessly; "but I know not. I have wealth and laurels. It may be that they are his chief object. Oh, Carlos, it is not the rich and the exalted who can believe in love or in devotion. And yet Heaven knows I need both."

"And a word, ay, a look, a sign, will ever command them, lady," he resumed, eagerly. "Only try me, test me, and," he added, in a low, passionate tone, "repay me."

"By what?" she said, turning away her head in affected anger or confusion, it would have been difficult to say which, "by liberal largesses?"

"By words and looks of love and kindness, by giving me your fair hand to touch but for a brief moment," he said, fervently. "It is not money, it is not even praise, or advancement, that can bind me to you. It is only one reward that can content me, bind me to you for ever."

Celia yielded the white fingers to his clasp with a well-affected smile.

It was easier, safer, to ignore any deeper meaning

fill the proffered services were exhausted, the goal of safety reached.

And Carlos greedily grasped the soft palm and pressed his lips again and again to its white surface with impetuous fervour during the brief moment it was permitted to rest in his.

"Now," he said, "let me understand, *senorita*, which is to be my first service. Is it to prevent annoyance from that man?"

"I may require more organized and permanent aid from you than such summary impetuosity," she said, with a bewitching smile. "Carlos, I dare not confide in you yet. It is enough for me to tell you that it depends on another besides himself whether Mr. Herries can exercise any power to threaten or injure me. And if you were sincere, if I could really trust you, Carlos," she added, "then you might merit the gratitude of a lifetime at my hands."

"Signorita, of what avail are words? I would swear, but if you cannot trust my words then oaths are nothing," he returned, eagerly.

"It is enough," returned Celia. "I do believe, I do trust you, Carlos—only the secret of my life is too weighty to be entrusted lightly; and that man who has just left me—whom you justly suppose I hate and fear—has that secret in his keeping. Carlos, that very secret must be destroyed, and the power to reveal it cut from under the insolent holder of the mystery. That would be indeed to cut up by the very roots the poisonous tree. You comprehend, Carlos?"

"To hear is to obey," he said, quickly. "Now, *senorita*, for your confidence, your commands."

Celia Vyvian paused as on the very brink of a precipice. She knew full well that every such revelation but increased the bondage in which she had placed herself. She knew that there were impetuous passions and deep determination that would not easily brook control or disappointment in that dark Southern nature, and that her secret once told would place her in his power for ever.

But then he was young, obscure, friendless. He would scarcely be credited even were he to spread slander of the high-born heiress, and a little, a very little, would suffice to restrain him and bind him to her very feet.

Desperate was the plunge into that giddy depth. But equally desperate was her position on the pinnacle where she stood if the two whom she had reason to dread were left in licensed liberty to threaten and to rule her every action and control her revenues and her pleasures.

It was a certain risk, a possible ruin, but of the other alternative she was well assured, and even her imperious spirit clung to the aid and support of the captive to her brilliant charms.

"Carlos," she whispered, "come hither. If you will swear to keep my secret I will trust you with the fortunes of my whole future life, and give you such a chance for advancement and for wealth as you never could have dreamed of in your wildest visions."

"As I hope for your favour, for my future happiness in this world and the escape from punishment in another, I will be true and faithful to you," was the fervent reply.

And kneeling at his fair young mistress's feet, his eyes as well as ears drinking in the words she uttered, that impetuous, ardent spirit learned the secret that was to influence his own and many another life.

CHAPTER XI.

Even the doom'd is lulled
On Death's lean arm to rest in visions wrapt,
Crowning with Hope's bland wreath his shuddering surer.

"Is he better—conscious, Alfonso?" said a soft, rich voice that scarcely seemed to do more than float in the silent atmosphere of the apartment in the solitary vine-clad cottage where it was heard.

One of the tenants of the apartment which that gentle visitant entered was an old man in the Oriental turban and belted flowing gown that betokened a Moorish origin.

And his flowing beard and bright black eye fully strengthened the belief in his Eastern birth and descent.

The other occupant of the apartment was one apparently unconscious of his very existence, for he lay still and motionless on the couch where he had been placed some days before, and his closed eyes and rigid form told of suffering and danger if not death itself.

The girl who came to join these silent companions was indeed a contrast to both in her brilliant beauty and her youthful vigour and energy. But the difference between that quiet chamber and the crowded haunts which she frequented was to the full as striking and as wonderful to the fair visitant; and yet Norma d'Albano was more touchingly lovely than in her most gay attire, and more thrillingly excited by the tidings she came to hear than by the applause even of listening thousands.

Alfonso, the venerable old attendant of the invalid, shook his head sadly as he replied:

"There is no sign of consciousness; no, not even by the trembling of a lid. Sweet child, alas! I fear you have compromised yourself in vain."

Norma stamped her little foot impatiently. "Alfonso, did I not tell you never to utter one word like that again?" she exclaimed, in low but excited tones. "It is enough that I had full and powerful reasons for my conduct. Do you think I would have endangered you, my good old friend, otherwise?" she added, reproachfully.

"Nay," said the old man, "nay, dear child; you are unjust now. Think you my old, nearly spent life can be of so much value to myself or others as to influence my words or actions where you are concerned? No, it was of yourself, my loved foster-child, the adopted daughter of my old patron, that I would think and speak. You prevailed over my fears and scruples in this rash deed against my better judgment. But I tremble for the consequences, whether to your life or to your fame."

"Alfonso," she said, softly, taking the old man's hand in hers, "do you remember how I once risked all for the patron you loved so well? He was ill, the dreadful plague had seized him; I nursed him when others fled."

"Yes, yes, and he but ill repaid the devotion," returned the old man. "True, he knew it not, he was unconscious of all save suffering; but it was ill done to leave you penniless after your gentle rearing."

"No, I did not speak, I did not think of that," returned the girl, eagerly; "what I meant was but this, that if you believed my poor services were of any avail then to him you so loved and honoured, you can surely trust me now that I will not shrink from danger. Nor do I think it can reach your dear old friend. They would never dream of searching in this secluded spot, whether he lives or dies."

"Perhaps not, perhaps not," he returned, "yet there must be some sharp inquiry for one so well known as that unfortunate aristocrat, albeit his name is as yet a secret to me. And you, do you love him, that you are so brave on his behalf?"

"No, no, a thousand times no," she exclaimed, "yet I would give half I can gain in that garish, noisy theatre to ensure his life."

"Then the life of one dear to you hangs on it?" said the old man, eagerly. "My child, beware! there can be little chance of happiness for one like you with a man capable of such a deed as that barbarous murder, whether from jealousy or revenge. Cast him off, break such bonds, if indeed any exist," he went on, warningly.

Norma shuddered involuntarily. "Alas, alas! I cannot," came from her lips ere she was aware; then she added, in a more firm and calm tone, "Alfonso, I claim your promise not to torment me with questions and counsel. Perhaps you are right; it may be so—but it is too late, too late, and the life I lead is so utterly beyond your ken that you can scarcely judge of what is best and needful for me in its wild excitement and giddy whirl. But you have not told me yet what hopes you have for your patient."

"Very little," replied the old man; "I have tried every resource that I possess—save one—in vain; he has spoken not, moved not, since he was brought hither."

"And that one—why do you not try that one remedy?" asked the girl, eagerly.

"Because it is desperate; because I never venture on it save when I find that, should it kill, it would be but a few brief days or hours before such a fatal issue would in any case have ensued," he returned; "had I been in time when my old, dear patron was dying I should have tried its virtues then."

"Then try them now, at once," cried the impetuous girl; "surely you cannot doubt me, after all those miserable days?"

"As ever, young and impatient," returned the old man, with a smile that had a wistfulness in it. "No, the time has not come, there are days yet of life in that young and stalwart frame; and until I am sure that nothing else will avail you will never induce me to waste the precious, though dangerous, remedy. Will you not trust me, child?" he said, reprovingly.

Norma approached the bed and bent over the pillow.

What a contrast she saw to the face all glowing with youth and vigour and impetuous love for her own fair self which she had seen but a few days before.

Cold, pale, motionless as a statue, Granley Neville lay, all unconscious that the beautiful idol of his worship was gazing at him with a deep interest that his days of health had never won at her hands.

"Well," she said, turning with a deep sigh, "it would be indeed worse than ungrateful if I did not leave him and myself in your hands, dear old friend."

She half knelt, half crouched by the old man's chair, with a beseeching look in her dark eyes, such as,

save in some representation of character, was rarely seen and never by the admiring throng in her proud face.

"Alfonso, have you no idea who I really am?" she said, suddenly. "Can you not tell me more than you have hitherto done of the circumstances of my adoption by the old count, whom I once called father?"

"None," answered the old man. "I was away when he returned home with you—then a child of seven years old, and he was always reserved and almost irritable when any circumstance was touched upon that concerned your origin or what might have induced him to take charge of so young a child when he had no wife to act as mother to her in the years of helpless and early girlhood. All that he did say and all that I knew of him convinced me that no guilt was attached to his share of the business."

"Then you believe there was—that there is guilt, and therefore I am but the degraded creature the world considers that the opera prima donna must be—one to load with applause and gifts and—contempt."

"Hush, hush, child; do not speak so bitterly, so ungratefully of the gifts that Heaven has lavished on you," replied Alfonso, with a solemn reverence in his uplifted eyes. "There can be no such reproach cast upon you. And you, my child, save from your headlong impetuosity—your haughty pride—can never merit it from friend or foe."

"But tell me all—every word, every circumstance that could throw light on the matter," said the girl, eagerly. "I have been perhaps too madly engrossed with the present, I have never given such anxious care as I should have bestowed on the past, Alfonso, I have but a few more minutes to wait, but at least you can go over the brief story, such as you remember it, of my advent here, I mean at the old chateau which I shall never see more."

"Child, when you have known more changes and more strange windings in the crooked paths of this life you will speak less confidently of the future," was the calm response. "But time alone can prove that to the young and headstrong," he went on.

"And you, poor child, have but too much reason to chafe and despair under the hard dealings of fate. It is but little I can tell you of the past," he continued, marking the girl's impatience. "Still all that I remember of the brief period I will relate as faithfully as possible at this distance of time. Count D'Almariva had been absent some six months or more from his chateau when news came to the seneschal and to me that he was about to return and that he would bring with him the daughter of a gentleman, an old and valued friend of his youth, for whom arrangements were to be made without stint or delay. Old Albert grew morose and sour under the tidings. 'I do not understand it,' he said; 'I think I know most of my lord's friends—at least, those whom he should not be ashamed to call such. And I cannot think of any who have claims to such a service whom my lord should hesitate to mention by name.' And he does not mention, ay, nor direct what is required?"

joined in Dorothea, the housekeeper; 'I suppose I had better have the west wing got ready, where the young ladies of the Vermont had been want to be brought up.' But when the day came, and the count's carriage drove up, followed by two others with attendants and baggage, then we were almost equally petrified. The count himself stepped out before the groom could well open the carriage door, then, glancing back into the vehicle, he stretched his hand out with a sort of beckoning air, and then came a light spring, a clear, ringing laugh, a tiny, elfin-like child bounded out on to the broad steps, and clung to the count as if he had been her veritable father to whose love she had a right. It was you, my fair child," went on the old man, tenderly gazing at the flushed face of his auditor. "From the moment you placed your foot in that old, splendid, time-worn castle a new life was instilled in its walls, though it was a sort of witchery rather than reason that caused the change. The count vouchsafed little explanation of his eccentric conduct, and what little was said he told me. 'There will be scandal and gossip, Alfonso,' he said; 'as to my adoption of this orphan child. I expect you to stop it—nip it in the bud and it will die. Enough that the little girl was life to one who gave or rather saved my life, and it is for his sake she shall receive shelter and kindness here.' 'Then the child's father is dead?' I ventured. 'The signorina has no father but myself,' was the stern reply; 'at least, none who wish for her care and presence in his household. That is enough for my dependents so long as they wish to retain their places in my favour and service. Tell them this, Alfonso. Perhaps this would have been sufficient for most of the retainers of that lordly house, but not so in my case, who had always been treated with indulgence and even respect by that proud noble. Pardon me, my lord,' I said, firmly, 'but may I not venture to remind you that though it is but an insolence to com-

ment on your conduct the blame and disgrace may fall on the innocent and the undeserving? Who shall persuade the world that you, my lord, would adopt a child of that age without claims on your bounty? It is possible to close their mouths, not to shut the sluices of their thoughts," I went on, significantly. "Then you intend to convey that to these insolent tattlers should be told and explained the real name and position of my little Norma," he said, stertorally. "Alfonso, you pass your privileges." "But not my duty, I hope, my lord," I persisted. "The honour of your house is dear to me, and the innocence of that helpless child appeals to every manly heart for pity and protection. I desire but your pledged word for its vindication to stake my very life for its truth." The count's brow flushed, but he did not speak for a few moments. Then he said, faintly, "Alfonso, you have done me good service in my youth and manhood, and I will indulge your heedless fancies now, but for the last time. If you mean to ask whether Norma d'Albano is my child I tell you simply the very idea is an insolent falsehood; if you inquire who she is and what circumstances surround her birth, you pass your duty. I have given my word never to divulge them—save in one event, and for that provision has been made without your assistance or exhortations. Now let me hear no more of such insolent and meddling folly." Sighing, it was enough, say, and more than enough, where a man like the count was in the case. I bowed in silence as I retired, but I always believed that when the count died he would leave both an explanation of the mystery and a suitable provision for you. But there was neither, unless the rare talent for music, that he had cultivated to the utmost, might be deemed a heritage.

Norma mused thoughtfully. "And you do not think there are papers and directions left to give a clue to my birth?" she said, at length.

"I do not believe it," was the reply. "The remains of those as celebrated as the noble count are too carefully investigated for such a document to be overlooked, and none has been discovered. At this distance of time it is well nigh impossible that it ever should be. My child, give up vain regrets and hopes, and apply yourself to winning a name and a position in this country rather than the step-mother land that gave you birth."

"Then I was born in England?" exclaimed the girl, quickly.

"You had an English accent; I can but suppose such was the case," he returned. "But I know—I can tell you nothing more—nothing."

Norma rose to depart with a troubled look in her lovely features.

"Farewell, Alfonso," she said, holding out her hand with the unconscious haughtiness of a princess. "I believe you are true and good, but all this is intolerable in its dark mystery and well-nigh drives me mad with its thick, baffling gloom. I will return ere long—most probably to-morrow," she added as she turned from the apartment. "If you do love me as you pretend, save him—and me, Alfonso!"

And, with a graceful wave of her small hand, she vanished from the room.

"Poor child—poor child," muttered the old man. "Pity to torment her with vague suspicions and fancies. She has enough to endure, and will have each year—ay, each month, a heavier weight of grief. But what is in my skill to effect, or my strength to aid, shall be poured out at the service of her father's child."

CHAPTER: XII.

Her lips were pressed

Till the blood started, and the wondering veins
Of her transparent forehead were swelled out,
As if her pride would burst them.

Her dark eye was clear and tearless.

"EUSTACE, what ails you? where have you been so long, and to return with this troubled and injured air?" asked Irene's sweet voice as her lover entered the saloon and came to his accustomed place at her side, on the very day after Norma's visit to the recluses. "It is at least three days since you were here, and they have appeared double that number to your Irene."

It was irresistible, that plaintive, sweet flattery, and Eustace's reply had a ring of truth in it which satisfied the blind girl's quick senses.

"My beloved, every moment has been as an hour to your Eustace, only that it has been employed on your behalf, and to hasten our irrevocable union."

A crimson tide flooded the delicate face at the whispered words.

"Yes, you have been away from Naples. So my father told me," he replied.

"Sir Hugh was right. I returned only this very morning, and have flown on love's wings, my darling," he said, kissing her fair brow. "But tell me, Irene, are you prepared, willing, without hesitation, to become my bride?"

She kissed lightly the hand that held hers for lack of a less easy though not more satisfactory reply.

"Then I must have no delay now that all is completed. My beloved shall first give herself to me for good or evil, and then shall receive her sight as the best gift a bridegroom can bestow. Am I not right, darling?"

"Yes, yes—only I fear—I tremble at the very prospect," she murmured.

"Of what?" returned Eustace. "Of your bridal or your restoration to sight, dearest one?"

"Ah, I do not know—it is but a vague, a causeless alarm," she said, shivering in his arms. "There is a dark shadow in my mind. I have had it in your absence; I feel that something is about to happen which will plunge me into yet deeper sorrow than I now endure. Eustace, hide me for this folly."

"Indeed I must," he said, with a touch of real reproach in his tone. "It is anguish to me and to yourself, my love, to apprehend evil where all the future is connected with me. If you do not trust you do not love me, Irene, and, if so, my power to save, if not my will, would vanish now and for ever."

"No, no, no! do not abandon me," she cried, anxiously. "Eustace, if my father should be taken from me I have no one but you; and one grief that haunts me is that fear. His voice is sadder, his step feebler, his cheeks feel thinner and more wan," she added, earnestly. "Is it not so? Am I not right, dear Eustace?"

"It is perhaps the suspense that wears Sir Hugh. He is anxious for the certainty of joy," answered her lover. "Be brave for his sake, Irene. Hope deferred maketh the heart sick. Let there be an end of the useless penance. Be mine, and then all will quickly follow of joy and bliss. Let it be at once—in a week—a fortnight—no more, Irene, darling."

She thought for a few moments. It seemed so impossible for that fragile creature to exert a will of her own, and nerve herself to assert its power, that her next words well nigh deprived Eustace of breath.

"No," she said, "not first—not while there is any doubt of my recovery. If you have the skill you believe in so strongly, it is but the brief space of a few days that will be the delay I require."

"You require, Irene?"

"Yes, require," she said, softly, though the tone was firm: "it was your promise to my father, and will be fulfilled, I know. If you give me sight, Heaven knows my heart will be overwhelmed with love and gratitude; and, if not, then it is for me to say whether you will wed a helpless blind bride."

There seemed a fierce struggle in the young man's breast, to judge from those workings of the features that were hidden from his young companion.

Anger, surprise, scorn and doubt might be read by a clever physiognomist in rapid succession as they flitted past.

Then his resolve seemed taken.

"Your will must be mine, my fair Irene," he said, at last, "yet it deprives me of the happiness of proving my sincere devotion to you under all sorrows and deprivations. It shall be so, then, but quickly, at once; I need but a brief notice for preparation, but a brief space for performance, and in a week—a brief week—I shall test my powers and my love for you. Are you willing?"

She turned deadly pale, but her courage, or rather her faithfulness and truth, did not forsake her in the crisis.

"Yes," she said, "if my father consent, a week will prove whether I shall see or remain for ever in this fearful darkness. Heaven help me and him, my poor, loving father, in his hour of need."

It was strange she did not mention him, the lover—the betrothed.

Eustace marked it, but only by a bitter smile.

"How does this happen, Norma?" Since I have been here I found you absent; ay, and on days when you have no professional claims on your time," said Eustace Villiers, sternly, as the light form of the cantatrice entered the saloon where he was awaiting her advent.

"If you do not own me as a wife you must not be impatient if I scarcely recognize the right to demand an account of my actions," she replied, carelessly, throwing aside the lace veil that was wrapped in a graceful, picturesque coiffure round her head and form, and in so doing, accidentally loosening the diamond arrow-shaped brooch that clasped her high bodice at the throat.

A small packet fell from the dress, thus loosened from its confinement, and Eustace snatched it up ere Norma could secure it from the grasp.

"Ah! this is well, some of the bank-notes that you kept back, my pretty aware," he said, mockingly; "they will serve to help me very conveniently in a little transaction I wished to complete," he said, examining the delicate but valuable tissues.

Norma flushed angrily, contemptuously, but she did not deign reply, though the words, "Idiot, selfish idiot; to forget," rose to her very lips.

Eustace went on: "Pray can you enlighten me as to the exact terms of your agreement, Norma? I mean with the manager of the Opera. I am not sure whether I shall allow you to renew it."

"That will be at my good pleasure," she said, scornfully. "If I minister to your extravagance, Eustace, I will at least have my own way in the mode in which it is done. You have drained my purse even now," she said, glancing at the packet he still held in his fingers. "What do you want more?"

"You can do better in another place, where your fame will precede you," he said. "What say you to St. Petersburg? I can negotiate for you to have a large sum down, which will replenish your purse," he added, scornfully.

"I do not choose to leave Naples, nor that you should quit it either," she said, "not till there are many things decided that are now in a terrible suspense."

"Indeed, and you claim liberty to decide for yourself and me?" he returned.

"Yes, and shall exercise it," she said, calmly.

"By what power, *belle capricieuse*?" he asked. "I am afraid you would find the worst of it in any such contest, silly child. Your success has turned your head, Norma."

"If it is turned it is by a far different excitement," she answered, coldly. "But I decline all farther argument for the present, Eustace. It is enough that I choose to stay here. The money of which you have just robbed me is enough to gratify your extravagance for weeks and months."

"Ah, indeed. May I ask the grounds of this extraordinary bravado?" he asked. "You must be delirious or mad, it seems to me—at least I hope it is not more criminal rebellion."

She turned her flashing eyes on him with a blazing light that made his lower under their gaze.

"Beware," she said; "do not push me too far, Eustace. I may be dangerous if that spirit within me is once roused beyond chance of control. For both our sakes be advised, be warned."

There was something ominous in that look and tone that brought an uneasy terror to his breast, but he only appeared to laugh off the solemn, ominous warning.

"Come, come, *petite*, do not be so terribly waspish," he said. "I know you may very fairly persuade yourself that there is some ground of complaint, but before long it shall all be settled, all removed, if you will have patience, Norma."

"Removed, and in what way?" she asked, quickly.

"I shall present my wife to the world," he said, evasively, "but not here. You must arrange to leave this city before that can take place."

He expected a gleam of eager joy, but he only saw a look of half-sad, half-contemptuous suspicion.

"It may be so, we shall see," she replied. "You may find that it may scarcely comport with your safety or welfare to leave here, Eustace. But let it pass; you have your secrets and I have mine, and I warn you that I do not in the least intend to give up myself to such profitless slavery in future—no, not unless you are prepared to give me the privileges and the rights of my position as your wife."

"Well, we shall see, we shall see," he said, evasively, "but where have you been, Norma?"

"Oh, paying some necessary visits," she said, carelessly. "And I heard it buzzed about that Lord Neville has disappeared in a mysterious manner. Do you know it, Eustace?" she added, with a keen glance which he appeared to bear unmoved.

"Gone off on some sudden freak, I presume," he said. "Does it affect your happiness very much, Norma? I shall begin to think that my suspicions were but too well founded since you attach such moment to the movements of a mere popinjay blown about by every gust of wind."

"Eustace, are you quite a villain?" she asked, suddenly. "If you would retain one shadow of my belief in you, such words must never again escape your lips or even appear in your very looks. It rouses a very demon in my soul, and might make me like yourself," she added, fiercely.

"Come, come, silly girl, this is turning jest into earnest with a vengeance," returned the young man, with apparent lightness. "Commend me to the unreasonableness of a woman's nature—you are indignant at carelessness and jealousy alike. However, as you are so minded to-day I will leave you and fulfil an engagement elsewhere."

"To Miss Delancy?" she asked, with apparent calmness.

"Yes, to Miss Delancy," he repeated, musingly. "I expect to find her rather more gentle and complaisant than your spoiled, exacting self, Signorina Norma. So addio till we meet again at the opera-house."

Norma did not, as he perhaps expected, burst into a frenzied passion of reproach or prayers. But she quietly drew up her small figure and approached him where he sat, till she could speak into his very ear.

"Eustace, mark me, if you attempt any dark treachery where that unhappy girl is concerned you and she will alike rue the day. You are in my power, I know a secret that might ruin and wither your every hope, every prospect in life, and it shall be proclaimed to the whole world if you drive me to desperation."

That man's self mastery was perhaps wonderful—even she could not decide what emotion she created in his heart.

But had she caught a momentary look at his glittering, snake-like eyes it would have bid her take warning—such as might have spared after crime and misery.

"You are a little jealous simpleton, Norma; but I have perhaps played with you enough," he said, passing his arm around her form and drawing her towards him. "There, I shall stay here as I intended from the first, and enjoy a rare hour of quiet, undisturbed domestic happiness. My little wife has too formidable a host of admirers for even her poor husband to hope to drive them all away till he can publish his right to her before the whole world."

"It is well," was the only answer vouchsafed. "I would fain not be driven to the desperate deed which would torture me as much as yourself, Eustace. Ah, me! ah, me! There is a dark, dark cloud over us!" she murmured as she eluded his embrace and passed into the other apartment.

"A dark cloud," he murmured, in a soft whisper. "Yes, and idiot that she is she does not take advantage of the gloom to hide her revenge. It is well that I know it in time. She must be dealt with ere too late."

(To be continued.)

THE EYE.

THERE is no optical instrument maker who does not succeed in constructing an apparatus much more perfect in many points than the eye—that marvellous organ which we are inclined to regard as the masterpiece of vital and organic architecture, on account of the great service it renders to man.

This sense of sight, which is so far-reaching that it gives us the power to penetrate infinite space and apprehend the universe, at the same time makes us familiar with the minutest objects; this sense, which is the freest and most unencumbered in its actions—for our sense of touch is limited by the length of our arms, hearing to a few thousand feet, the senses of smell and taste having still greater limitations—this sense, I say, acts through an agent apparently so imperfectly adapted to its purpose that recent investigations stand amazed at the idea how by it we receive any intelligible impressions. That we do is an evidence of the independence of the mind, and of its power to make useful these necessary and imperfect means of contact with the outer world, and proves the necessity of educating this sense to quick and precise perceptions in order to correct its faults and perfect the work which Nature has designedly left imperfect.

The eye has the defect of what in physics is called the "aberration of sphericity;" that is, the rays that pass through the centre of a lens have a common focus, but rays which pass a certain distance from the centre do not converge at the same point, but pass beyond. The nearer they come to the circumference the greater the focal distance, if the lens is rigorously spherical. In a good optical instrument this defect is scarcely perceptible, the rays being centralized by flattening the lens. Again the eye is not spherical, but has an elliptical curve. This was for some time thought to be an advantage, but the contrary is the truth. And this curve is not even well centred, that is, placed symmetrically to the visual axis like a lens, but is changed and twisted in every direction. From this results what has been called the astigmatism of the eye, which consists in not being able to see at the same distance a vertical line with the same distinctness as one that is horizontal.

This recently discovered phenomenon has attracted the attention of all oculists, as it sometimes constitutes a real disease of the eye. Again, the retina of the eye has spots where it is entirely blind to impressions of light. But is this eye, which is unsymmetrical, badly centred, blind in spots, at least perfectly translucent? Not at all. The cornea and crystalline lens of the eye are not absolutely limpid, as appears when examined through an intense blue or violet light, which renders it fluorescent. This phenomenon is due to the traces of a substance analogous to quinine, a body which possesses in the highest degree the property of fluorescence, that is, of emitting a light of its own, under the excitement of blue or violet lights. The crystalline lens, itself, is not of a homogeneous composition, but has a crystalline structure of six branches. This is the cause of the stars appearing to us with rays. All attempts to explain this phenomenon were vain until it was

found to be in the visual organ itself. It is for this reason that the crescent of the moon, when it is very thin, seems to be double or triple to some persons.

These facts are enough to show any one how prone the untrained eye must be to error and self-deception, and that seeing is not a physical but a mental act. In infancy the eye is aided by the hands or touch to acquire experience of the nature and consistency of things; later in life the eye asserts its superiority by instructing the hands to perform ingenious and cunning work. The two senses seem thus to continue mutually to assist and act upon each other. Touch lends to light material aid and support. The eye refines and gives intelligence to the material sense of touch, so that, when sight is wanting, touch takes its place and performs its duties.

The eye in its direct and steady look embraces but a small compass of actual sight; in fact, we clearly see but a small point, which comes just in the focus of the eye; and it is owing to a quick, vibratory movement of the eye that we are able to see large extents apparently at the same time.

THE SOCIAL SINBAD—WHY?

"THE terrible monster called Debt—
That cruel Old Man of the Sea—
On my neck and my shoulders is set,
A rider relentless to me.

In vain all the struggles I make
To cast off a burden so sore;
Every effort the tyrant to shake
His grip only tightens the more.

"Benefactors I never betrayed,
Ungrateful I never was known;
And why should I therefore be made
Feel the fate that befell Ixion—
My hands and my feet tightly bound,
With no prospect of getting them free;
Tied fast to a wheel that goes round
For ever and ever with me?"

"I never requested my wife
To keep me whenever I died,
As careful as though I had life,
A coffinless corpse at her side.
Then why this huge rock must I heave,
Like Sisyphus, ever in vain,
To find, when the mass I would leave
On the top, that it rolls down again?"

"From immortals no nectar I stole—
Roast turkey is more to my taste—
Yet Tantalus' fate is my dole,
While dainties around me are placed.
My food and my drink they recede,
As I'd grasp what before me is set;
And the things that I covet and need
Are seized by the monster called Debt.

"I've struggled, I've toiled, and I've prayed,
But tighter and tighter his clasp;
And useless the efforts I've made
To get my neck out of his grasp.
So I quietly plod on my way,
Contented the sad truth to know—
Till the debt due to nature I pay
The debts due to others I'll owe."

And that was the chant of a slave,
A Sinbad, who lives at our door,
Who'll be bond till he reaches the grave,
Where the monster can hold him no more.
But why such a noodle was he,
When many so stout he espied,
As to let that Old Man of the Sea
With his legs round his neck take a ride?

D. T. D. E.

SCIENCE.

RAILWAY CARRIAGE WARMING.—The West Swiss Railway appears to have solved the problem of carriage warming satisfactorily to itself and its passengers. A pipe extending the length of the compartment under each seat contains hot water, which is heated by the fire of a small stove at the end of the carriage.

ARTESIAN WELLS IN CHICAGO.—Artesian wells are being sunk in Chicago; twenty-one had been bored, according to the latest accounts, and in no instance has there been a failure of a plentiful supply of water. The usual depth of the wells is from 1,200 to 1,300 feet, and the average cost is 6,000 dols. for a 54-inch well 1,200 feet deep, and 5,000 dols. for a 44-inch bore to the same depth.

CANADIAN GRAPHITE.—Some exceedingly fine samples of graphite have been imported. They are from a mineral property near the village of Buckingham, on the River de Liviere, a tributary of the Ottawa, in Canada, and which, from the appearance of these specimens, should be one of the richest in the world, as certainly nothing equal to them has been seen in this country since the famous Russian

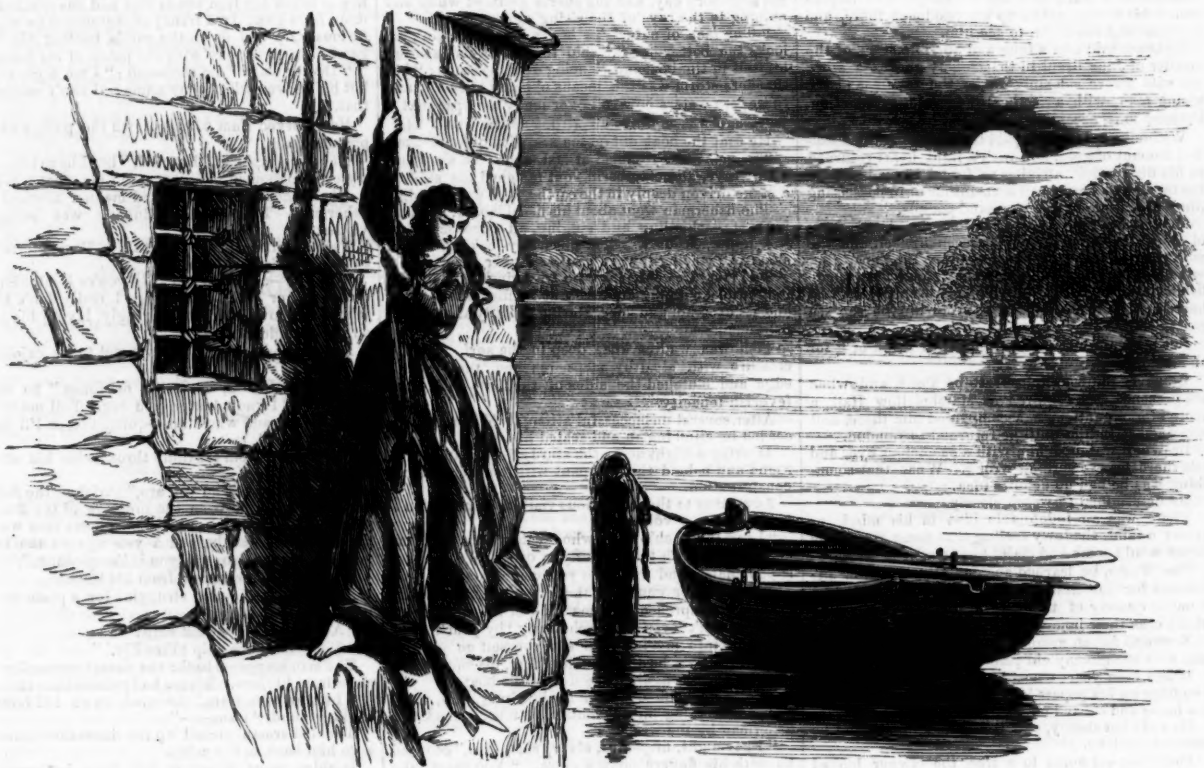
plumbago blocks shown in the great international Exhibition of 1862, by M. Alibert. The lodes on this Canadian property are said to be fourteen in number, some of them six to ten feet in width; and, according to the report of Mr. Henwood, at least 5,000 tons could be annually raised from them. One of the specimens shown measures 2 feet by 16 inches by 4 inches, although it is now considerably less than it was by reason of fragments broken away. The ore has been assayed and found to contain 97 per cent. of plumbago. In addition to the veins of pure graphite the mountain in which they exist consists of a sort of gneissic rock, in which plumbago is largely disseminated, the rock yielding, when crushed and washed, 10 to 60 per cent. of that substance. It is stated that 10,000 or more tons could be raised yearly from this source.

PAPERS IN THE BOSTON FIRE.—Curious results have followed some of the experiments made upon charred papers and documents, and the examination of books in safes which proved worthless in the great fire at Boston. It has been found that what paper makers call poor paper, paper considerably "clayed," stood the test best. Parchment paper, used for bonds and legal documents, shrivelled up exceedingly, and the print blistered so that it could be read when writing was illegible. So it was with the engraved work on notes. The gilding on the account books burned and charred showed out as bright and clear as when the books were new, which brings up the question if to introduce gilt-edged account books would not be well, on the ground that the gilt would stay the passage by fire of the pages within. Books crammed into a safe so that it was difficult to get them out suffered considerably less than those that were set in loosely, and in some cases came out from safes in which everything else was worthless so far preserved that the figures on their pages could be deciphered. With charred papers, which could not be made transparent by any light whatever used, it was found after the employment of vitriol, oxalic acid, chalk, glycerine, and other things, that anything that moistened them to a certain stage—to which it was difficult work to get and not pass—made the lines, words, and figures legible through a magnifying glass. It has been the almost universal experience that lead pencil marks show out all right where ink marks cannot be distinguished. The success of the use of photography has also been noted.

PATENTS IN GERMANY.

ALTHOUGH the various states of Germany are united in one confederation for certain purposes, such as defence, commerce, etc., in relation to patents they are separate, and each state has its own patent laws. Some twenty patents are required to cover all the German states. The project of establishing a general patent law has been under consideration for some years, and there is now every probability of an early reform; however, there is considerable diversity of opinion on the subject. Some chambers of commerce, notably that of Leipzig, are in favour of the total abolition of patents; but the majority of competent authorities appear to favour the scheme of proposals put forward by the Association of German Engineers, of which the following are the details:

1. The patent system of Germany shall be unified and centralized.
2. A patent shall confer upon the inventor or his assigns the exclusive right and title in his discovery.
3. There shall be no preliminary examination.
4. As regards the novelty and priority of the invention an inquiry shall be instituted only when exceptions have been taken and objections made within a definite period; the invention shall be made known immediately upon the application for a patent, subject and entitled, however, to provisional protection.
5. A commission composed of judges and experts shall be summoned to take cognizance of the objections and to hear all persons interested.
6. There shall be an appeal to a superior court.
7. The following shall not be fit subjects for or capable of being patented, namely:
 - (a.) Purely scientific principles, without any definition or description of the mode of application.
 - (b.) Things prejudicial to public order and contrary to law and propriety.
8. The duration of the patent is fixed at fifteen years.
9. The patentee shall not be obliged to develop and carry out his invention.
10. The patent, though gratuitous for a certain number of years, is thereafter subject to a progressive tax.
11. The patent shall become void at the end of fifteen years, or in default of due payment of the imposts.
12. Foreigners shall be fully entitled to obtain patents in the empire.
13. The state may appropriate any patent, duly indemnifying the patentee.
14. Every patentee may work and develop the object of his patent throughout Germany in whatever way he may think fit.



[JANE BRENT'S ESCAPE.]

THE GOLDEN LURE.

CHAPTER VII.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.

Lovell.

WHEN Jane Brent became fully conscious and rational she found herself in bed, in a great bleak room, that seemed to be built up somewhere among the clouds.

She looked vaguely around her, trying to remember where she was.

Her head pained her terribly, and she put her hand mechanically to her eyes. It came in contact with a linen bandage, tied tightly around her throbbing brows, and in an instant the recollection of her terrible struggle with her would-be murderer rushed to her mind.

She was spared from death to find herself a prisoner for life, to know that she was doomed to a perpetual existence with the two creatures whom she knew to be fiends in human form.

A shudder passed over her shrunken frame; she looked at her hands. They were almost fleshless, and so thin and white as to seem transparent.

"I have been ill," she said aloud, and her voice echoed strangely on her ears. It sounded hollow, and like the voice of one who was on the verge of the grave.

Looking towards the window, she perceived the icicles hanging outside the panes, sparkling in the glittering sunshine like myriads of precious gems.

"I am alone, and with my enemies," she thought, turning her face to the wall; "I am the heiress of a hundred thousand pounds; but what a curse the fact has been to me! Oh, if I were back again at Sandhill, I would endure untold privations ere I would ever present a claim to Marshmellow Hall."

Two great tears stood in her sunken eyes, and rolled down over her pallid cheeks at the memory of that happy past.

A great golden bar of sunshine fell on the counterpane, and danced for a moment on her white, pinched face. She turned to it with a grateful thrill.

"At least," she whispered, faintly, "if earth holds no friends for me, I am not yet forgotten by Heaven. My life has been once more preserved, although for what purpose I know not; but I will hope and believe that the Providence which has succoured me in my hour of need will continue to watch over me."

No longer she felt friendless and alone, and her tired eyelids closed, and she fell into a deep and quiet

sleep with a smile on her wan and colourless lips. When she awoke the innkeeper's wife was sitting by the bedside.

"How do you feel?" she asked, in a not unkind tone, as Jane opened her eyes to the light.

"I hardly know, madam," she replied, wearily. "I daresay I am much better than I have been."

"I rather think so, if I know anything about the matter. You've laid here for three months, and I expected you'd give up the ghost in spite of me. But you'll be better now."

"Where am I?"

The woman frowned, but finally replied:

"You're in the tower of an old ruin, situated in the centre of Wolfenden Waste, the bleakest, most out-of-the-way place in all England, and here you'll stay as long as you live. It will be impossible for you to ever get away, and if you behave yourself you will fare much better than if you play any tricks."

Jane said nothing but she thought "while there is life there is hope," and the parting words of Dr. Evlin seemed suddenly to ring in her ears:

"If you really need me, do not fail to let me know, and I will assuredly come at your call."

A blush suffused her face as she thought of his earnest manner.

When he uttered the speech a little thrill went like an electric flash from head to foot, and her heart beat furiously.

"I'm not in love with Doctor Evlin," thought she, resolutely, "of course not."

Weeks went by, and Jane gradually recovered her lost strength, but she made no effort to escape from her lonely prison.

As yet escape would simply have been impossible, for the old ruin was built in the midst of a wild and dismal glen, almost surrounded by damp, marshy land, rendering it impossible to reach it, save by the lake, which extended some distance to the front.

It was an antique stone structure, flanked by two tall towers, with deep narrow windows sunk into the solid sides.

Here, with the sole companionship of the innkeeper and his wife, and a huge mastiff that was chained to the little landing, Jane Brent was as securely hidden from the world as if she slept in her coffin.

They furnished her with books, birds and flowers, and gave her permission to row upon the lake when either the one or the other could watch her from the landing.

She made as much of this last recreation as she possibly could without exciting their suspicion.

If the time ever came when she could unfasten the gaily painted skiff from its moorings, and, unper-

ceived, float out beyond the pursuit of the two ogres who guarded her, she would do it.

She determined to practise rowing as much as she could, and perfect herself in the art, so that, if ever put to the test, flight would be comparatively easy.

Twice Ingersol had been there, and Dykham had locked her up in the topmost room of the tall tower, and there kept her until the visitor had taken his departure.

CHAPTER VIII.

He is given
To sports, to wildness, to much company.

Shakespeare.

As soon as it was proved that the "Fire Fly" was really lost Ingersol came in possession of the vast fortune for which he had plotted and manoeuvred so villainously.

Brownell made over the accounts to him, and the accomplished schemer was now busily engaged in spending it as fast as he could.

He purchased a magnificent town residence, and kept a stud of horses that cost a small fortune; he frequented the opera, theatre, and belonged to several of the most exclusive and fashionable clubs in London.

He was known as a rather fast but immensely rich young gentleman, with no encumbrance.

Mothers angled for the "great catch," hoping to rid themselves of their marriageable daughters.

Fathers smiled, and looked bland at his approach, and sons practised his manners and adopted his vices.

Adam Brownell could hardly credit his senses when Ingersol flashed out in his magnificence. He had fancied him to be a gentleman whose quiet, unobtrusive tastes would lead him to shun the gay, glittering life of the metropolis.

He saw his mistake with an inward pang, and watched the spending of old John Marsh's golden hoard with a troubled heart.

A faint doubt still lingered in the mind of the lawyer.

Unknown to any one he had despatched a note to Doctor Evlin, at Sandhill, but though months passed he received no reply. The lawyer was powerless. Nothing could be done.

Ingersol was but spending his own, and when the lawyer had once cautioned him concerning his mode of living the young man had fired up at the first word and told him plainly to mind his own business.

After that rebuff Brownell never again mentioned the matter, and Ingersol plunged into excesses apparently with renewed vigour.

The Waste was situated not many miles from Marshmellow Hall, and the innkeeper had notified him of his having taken up his residence there, and Ingersol had run down to see him.

Dykham told him a long and horrible story of the murder of Jane Brent in that lonely gorge—a story his wife swore solemnly to be the truth—and the young man, with a feeling of intense satisfaction, listened to it, accepting it as such.

Without a murmur he paid the innkeeper the specified amount of gold, and with a light heart returned to his dissipation, striving to forget in mad revelry the terrible crimes he had been author of in possessing himself of the hundred thousand pounds.

There were times, however, when the ghastly faces of his victims would creep between himself and the merry revellers, times when even the sparkling wine and the shouts of gay companions were insufficient to drown the horrible death-shriek he had heard that stormy night in the old inn on the sea coast.

But he would not permit himself to think of it for an instant.

He never allowed himself to be alone, and when his presence was required at Marshmellow Hall a score of gay gentlemen accompanied him there, and remained with him until he returned to London.

Brownell watched him with a suspicious eye, and felt there was something wrong. What that something was he had no definite idea.

He determined to watch closely.

There was an indefinable idea in his mind, or rather a faint, shadowy feeling that some time Jane Brent would come and claim her own.

The Waste, he learned accidentally, was now inhabited for the first time in fifteen years, and he thought queerly of the taste of the occupants who chose it as their home.

Brownell felt an unconquerable desire to run down and visit the gloomy old place.

It had been years since he had seen it last, and, bundling up his papers hurriedly, the lawyer got on his horse and started off.

He rode but slowly, and it was about noon that he reached the lake.

Fastening his horse to a tree, the lawyer looked anxiously around.

No boat was in sight, and regretting his oversight in not having provided himself with a skiff of some kind, he was in the act of remounting when his sharp ears caught the level dip of oars.

He stepped back into the dense shadow and listened intently.

Looking out upon the lake, he beheld a small boat coming rapidly towards him.

He noticed, now, that the turf was slightly worn, and that a huge flat stone had been thrown into the water, close to the shore, as if to extemporize a kind of landing.

As the gaily painted thing approached the shore he noticed that it contained two occupants.

One was a great, grizzly-haired, coarse-looking fellow, with a clay pipe in his mouth, and the other—"Good gracious!" cried Brownell to himself, "there's Ingersol!"

There was no mistake in the man.

He sat in the end of the boat, his hat perched jauntily on one side of his head and a scornful smile curling his thin lips.

They ran the boat up into the shallow waters and Ingersol leaped out upon the stone.

The lawyer laid his hand on his horse's neck, to keep him quiet, and watched the pair before him.

"All is well," cried Ingersol, in a careless tone. "We need feel no alarm, for no one will ever think of looking for you here. If the corpse be found in that far-away gorge it will never be identified, for no one in this country ever knew her."

His words were plainly audible to the lawyer.

"No one will find the body," replied the innkeeper, with a grim smile.

They shook hands, and Ingersol walked away into the forest.

His companion turned his boat about and pushed off again over the lake.

"The corpse!" gasped Brownell, as the words "No one in this country ever knew her" rang in his ears. "Heavens! I suspect whom they mean."

Unfastening his horse, he leaped into the saddle and rode towards home.

CHAPTER IX.

Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.
Shakespeare.

OUR narrative returns to a period three days after the burning of the "Fire Fly."

Tom Barrack, a ruddy, red-faced fisherman, was down by the coast cleaning out his boat, preparatory to going round a small rocky point that extended into the sea, where he intended to sink his nets.

The great sea lay bathed in the beautiful light of the new-born day, and the shores gleamed white and shining in the rays of the rising sun.

"The face of natur' 'as had a good washin', an' looks the better for it," said the fisherman, seating himself in the boat and glancing over the scene; "but that 'ere storm was the means o' many a death, and these 'ere waters now roll over many a corpse that a week ago was as brave an' strong as the best o' us."

He sent the boat out on the sea with quiet strokes.

The point was rounded at last, and Tom shot into a tiny cave, and clambering out fastened the skiff to a stake driven deeply in the earth at the water's edge.

The fisherman went about his usual labour, stretching nets, whistling and singing, all unconscious of the approach of a wild, unearthly-looking object slowly advancing toward him from over the sand.

The creature came on with wavering footsteps, its long arms swinging aimlessly at its distended sides, and its eyes hot and fiery, staring steadily at the busy fisherman.

Tom was wading knee deep in the surf, and the creature with stealthy steps reached the water's edge and clutched the sides of the little craft with feverish tenacity.

After several unsuccessful attempts he finally succeeded in climbing in and seated himself.

Hearing a slight noise, the sturdy fisherman turned round and beheld the occupant with amazement and consternation.

Advancing to the mysterious visitor, he asked, in a loud and angry voice:

"I say there, shipmate, who the deuce are you that make so free with the property of other folks? What is your name, and where do you come from?"

The stranger gazed at the questioner, evidently failing to comprehend the meaning of the words.

"You don't even so much as say 'by your leave,' but climb into my boat, an' set yourself on my seat with the air o' a lord," grumbled Tom, discontentedly rattling his nets against the side of the boat.

The man shook his head meditatively, and, muttering something in an indistinct tone, seized the fisherman by the wrist.

"Fifty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty, sixty-one," counted he with his fingers on the pulse. "You must take an emetic, bathe yourself and soak your feet."

Tom started back a pace or two.

"He's touched, I reckon," thought he, keeping a sharp look-out on his companion. "Madder'n a March hare."

The man smiled wearily.

"I have come all the way from King Solomon's temple, and am very tired and thirsty. Will you get me something to eat and drink?"

"Blessed if I know what to do alongside of this here chap. How do I know that he won't knock my brains into the middle of next week before I can say Jack Robinson?" soliloquized Tom, unfastening the boat and pushing it off from its mooring.

With one eye on his craft and the other on his suspicious companion, the fisherman returned to the shore he had left in the morning, and went to the little cabin he called his home.

Tom set his visitor a chair, and brought him a basin of water to bathe his face and hands. But the creature seized the basin and drank the water with avidity, requesting more. When he had made himself presentable the two sat down to a hasty meal of Tom's own cooking, for he was a bachelor, and lived alone.

The new comer seemed very gentle and tractable, and clung to the fisherman like a veritable "second self," nor would he go away.

Days passed, He fished, mended broken nets, and talked medicine—the latter was as so much Greek to the fisherman—with no thought of his past or future. He never spoke his own name, or mentioned the names of his friends.

Weeks came and went. The chill, winter winds came sweeping drearily over the coast, and the snow shut out the sight of earth.

Spring appeared, and, following swiftly after, summer time, with its birds and bluebells and blossoms.

Then came the autumn, and an anniversary.

It was the nineteenth of November.

The fisherman's *protégé* seemed strangely restless. He wandered down by the shore, and looked uselessly off on the waters.

"Medicine can't affect water," muttered he, clasping his hands, "especially such a body of it. Medicine can do a great deal, but it can't save a—save a—"

A queer, inexplicable look passed over his face. He seemed to be trying to remember something, and rubbed his forehead vaguely.

"Science is a great thing, and but a trifle removed from the infallible. I always maintained that. In fact, it used to be an axiom among the faculty that I—Doctor—Doctor—Doctor—"

He endeavoured to speak the word, but it would not

come. Memory was pressing heavily upon him, trying to break the iron bands that had enshrouded his mind for a year. In a frenzy of excitement he walked furiously up and down the sands, beating his forehead in his mad rage with the palms of his hands.

"Doctor who?" he screamed; "I am a physician, but by Heaven what is my name? I can't remember that."

He observed Tom coming down the path, and approached him.

"I am a physician," he cried, "but I have forgotten my own cognomen. Will you tell me what it is?"

His flushed face and excited manner alarmed the fisherman. The harmless lunatic was becoming violent.

Thinking it best to conciliate him, Tom determined to humour his new fancy.

"Oh, yes—of course you are—you're Doctor Smith, or Brown, or Jones. I'm sure I really don't know which one now," said he, coaxingly, laying his hand on his shoulder.

But his long-time friend was not to be cajoled in that way.

"I'm not Brown, or Smith, or Jones," he cried, savagely; "I know better, you dog. Tell me where I came from, and who I am—quick, too, or I'll choke you to death!"

He grasped Tom's skinny throat with his strong fingers.

"I don't know who you are," shrieked the fisherman, his face livid from the pressure of the fingers. "But I think you are one of the fellows that was on the ship that was burned a year ago on the rocks yonder. Let me go, will you? I'm choking."

The clasp was removed from his throat.

A ray of intelligence struggled for a place in the man's wild eyes.

"A ship burned—what ship?"

"The—the—the ship 'Fire Fly.'"

The man staggered back: the vacant expression was gone from his face. Reason had resumed her throne.

"I know who I am," he cried, as he fell fainting to the ground, "I am—"

The fisherman picked up the insensible man and bore him back to the cabin.

Dashing some water in his face, he presently showed signs of returning consciousness.

"How long have I been here?" he asked, sitting up in bed and looking absently around the room.

"A year, sir," replied Tom.

The gentleman got up and stood upon his feet.

"I believe I am all right now," he said, with a smile; "and now, my man, you must give me full particulars of everything that happened on the night of the fire."

Tom scratched his head thoughtfully.

"Were none saved except myself?"

"There was one—a lady—but I don't know of any more."

"A lady? Was she young or old?"

"I don't know, but I'll easy find out. Mrs. Rache helped to carry her to the inn, an' she'll be likely to know all about it."

A short walk brought the fisherman and his companion to the house of Mrs. Rache.

"La, yes," she replied, as the gentleman interrogated her. "She was young, and pretty, too, and slender as a willow. I could lift her as easy as I can lift my Tid, here in the cradle, sir. But I don't know what became of her. I went up to the inn the next day, but it was shut, and nobody was there. Dykham House has not been opened since."

The gentleman turned away with a disappointed sigh.

"Let us go to the old inn, Tom," he said as they left the house. "I do not feel satisfied at all."

"Just as you say."

The road was grown over with grass, and the path was almost covered from sight, but they pushed aside the tangled weeds and went on.

The gentleman went up to the entrance of the inn and tried the door. For a moment it resisted his efforts, but time had rusted the hinges, and, the lock giving way, it fell heavily to the floor. Great gusts of dust started up as their audacious feet trod the silent rooms, and mice scampered hastily away, peeping at the intruders with frightened eyes from every corner.

The dishes, chairs and furniture were all in their proper places, looking for all the world as if the owner might come again at some unexpected moment and the wheels of the household move on again as before.

The empty corridors re-echoed with the sound of their footsteps as they traversed the upper storey, and the paper had crumbled and peeled from the mouldy walls and lay in heaps on the moth-eaten carpet.

A bed stood in one corner. The sheets were yellow and damp with mildew, and a great dark pool of something that had stained the pillows and bedding had also stained the carpet in front of the bed.

The gentleman examined it attentively. "It is human blood," said he, suddenly. "I tell you what it is, Tom—there is a horrible crime hidden here I am convinced."

They passed from the chamber into a large, square apartment with heavy windows, fronting on the sea. A ledge jutted out near one of them, and something covered with dust stood on it.

The gentleman took it down, "It was a brass-bound ebony box. "Jane Brent's treasure casket," cried he, sharply, letting it fall with a crash; "I would know it among a thousand. What has become of her?" As he dropped the box a dusty scrap of paper fluttered lightly to the floor.

Stooping mechanically, he picked it up and opened it.

He recognized the writing, and knew that in his hand he held Jane Brent's last appeal for succour.

The nineteenth of November—more than a year ago. Long ere this she was dead, most undoubtedly killed at the instigation of "the man Ingersol."

His soul writhed in torture as he perused the blistered page, and a yearning for revenge grew strong and fierce within him.

He picked up the box, and, calling to his companion, left the house.

CHAPTER X.

Better far is opportunity,
Seized at the lucky hour, than all the counsels
Which wisdom dictates or which craft inspires.
—Franklin.

It was near the middle of November when Ingersol paid Dykham his last visit, and the innkeeper made an appointment to meet him three days later in London.

For some time Jane Brent had been perfecting her plan by which she hoped to escape from her jailers, and she heard Dykham's announcement of his intended absence with a thrill of pleasure.

There were only two risks. One he would take himself, and the other she would provision and slyly push off from the landing, letting it drift down under her window.

She dropped several limbs and pieces of brush just below the point of the sill, where the boat was sure to become entangled and stop.

Before Dykham started on his journey he cautioned his wife about the safe keeping of their prisoner, and promising to bring back a quantity of things for winter use he got into the boat and rowed off.

Jane watched his departure with impatience. For days she had been secreting food in her own room and getting her clothing in readiness for flight.

She had no definite idea of where she would go first, her paramount desire being to get away from Wolfden Waste.

On the third morning from the time he left home Dykham would return, and she determined that he should not find her there when he came back.

He had been gone two days ere she found an opportunity to elude the vigilant eyes of his wife. In the evening Mrs. Dykham fed her prisoner, and locked her in her room, overlooking the lake, and then went to bed.

After waiting until she supposed her keeper to be asleep Jane awoke, and turning back the heavy shutters looked out.

All was quiet.

Taking her scissors, she cut the blankets and sheets into long slips, and knotted them firmly together.

This done, she filled the wicker basket she had secreted with bread and wine and lowered it from the window.

Removing her stockings, and shoes, she tied them in a bundle and, fastening them to her waist, she grasped her improvised ladder firmly and swung herself off the sill.

Her delicate flesh was cut and wounded as her body knocked against the rough sides of her stone prison in the descent, and her hands bled profusely, but she did not heed it.

She looked down fearlessly.

The clear, shallow waters were under her feet, and the boat was but a short distance away.

The rope did not reach the water, and the basket was swinging from the end of it.

She slid down to the end and waited a brief instant, then, letting go of it, dropped with a light splash into the waves.

For a few minutes she maintained a perfect quiet, but the innkeeper's wife was snoring away in her own room and the prisoner was at last free.

Finding that her movements were unsuspected, she unfastened the basket from the rope and waded to the boat.

Climbing into it, she pushed boldly off in the direction she had seen Dykham take a few days previously.

The boat passed the landing and the dog howled long and loudly.

Jane plied the oars vigorously, but the moon was coming up and she knew she would be discovered if the woman awoke, which she was sure to do.

She had one consolation—there was no way for Mrs. Dykham to catch her.

The boats were both gone, and the old woman could not swim.

At that instant the dog set up a prolonged howl, and the innkeeper's wife, springing out of bed, rushed to the window and saw her prisoner rowing off over the glistening lake as unconcerned as if she had full permission to do so.

The fluttering rope flapped before her eyes, and in an instant she perceived the girl's method of escape. She danced over the floor in paroxysms of rage.

"Come back, Jane Brent," she cried, loudly.

But the fugitive replied by a clear, ringing laugh of scorn and derision.

"Not I," she cried, mockingly. "My life would pay the forfeit were I in return, and after this year of lonely prison life liberty seems doubly sweet."

Mrs. Dykham ran down to the landing, and redoubled her shouts, but her efforts to recall her prisoner were of no avail.

The girl plied her oars steadily, and the light barge shot far off from Wolfden Waste and her murderous keeper.

In a short time the tall towers and sombre walls were lost in the distance, and like a solitary speck her boat rode over the quiet waters alone.

She rowed on, looking sharply for some place which she could push into and find a haven of concealment for herself and her boat.

Finally she discovered a small cove, overshadowed by large trees whose great limbs reached far out over the waters, and resuming her oars Jane shot the boat into it and stopped out on the shore.

Pulling the skiff up as well as she could, she covered it with boughs and dead leaves, and then searched for a secure hiding-place for herself.

She found it in the form of two immense trees growing so close together that the inner side of each was slightly curved, leaving a space sufficiently large to hold her comfortably.

Spreading her thick cloak around her strange domicile, she opened her basket of provisions and ate heartily, after which she commended herself to the care of Heaven and lay down to sleep.

Morning came, and she awoke with a start, forgetting for a moment where she was.

The sun was shining brightly, and, rising, she bathed her face and hands in the lake, and ate her breakfast.

She dared not resume her journey, for this was the day on which Dykham was to return, and she feared she would meet him.

Climbing back again, she hid herself in the aperture and waited for the night to come.

The shadows of the trees told her it was noon, and she was about to go down to the boat when she heard voices.

With bated breath she distinguished the coarse tones of the innkeeper, and presently she saw him shake hands with some one and push off alone.

Gazing anxiously at the man who was with him, Jane discovered him to be the same one she had first seen from the window at the old inn on the coast on the night of the burning of the "Fire Fly."

(To be continued.)

THE EMPEROR'S LAST WORDS.—The last words pronounced by the Emperor in his dying moments were addressed to his old and faithful friend, Dr. Conneau. They were: "Etien—vous à Sedan?" (Were you at Sedan?) Subsequently the Empress held his hand in hers, and gently kissed it; the Emperor smiled, and his lips moved, as if returning his wife's embrace, but he never uttered a word after that last thought—"Sedan!"

FRENCH SOVEREIGN EXILES.—Strange has been the destiny of the sovereigns who have ruled France during one brief century. With the exception of Louis XVIII. not one of the monarchs of that period has ended his life tranquilly in the Tuileries. Louis XVI. was guillotined—La Place de la Révolution. Napoleon I. died in exile—Sainte Hélène. Napoleon II. died in exile—Reichstadt. Charles X. died in exile—Holyrood. Louis Philippe died in exile—Claremont. Napoleon III. died in exile—Chislehurst.

A MARVEL IN POSTAGE.—Thirty years ago, when Rowland Hill established the penny post, it was considered a marvellous thing that a letter weighing half an ounce should be conveyed from one end of England to another for a penny. But what will be thought now of being able to send a parcel from London to the remotest village in India for one penny an ounce, or 1s. 4d. a pound? Yet this can be done, the Peninsular and Oriental Company having made arrangements with the Indian Post Office by which parcels delivered at the company's office in

London will be conveyed to any post-town in India and delivered to the person to whom they are addressed at a uniform charge of 1s. 4d. a pound, which covers all charges except the Indian customs duty, if the parcel happens to contain articles liable to duty, and may be paid on delivery.

THE YOUNG LOCKSMITH.

CHAPTER IV.

THE locksmith's apprentice was in a pleasant mood of thought. He had "had a good time" that evening, at old Captain Blount's hospitable home, and he walked leisurely along, and had reached the locksmith's door when he thought he heard a sharp cry in the distance.

He listened, looked back, but all was quiet. He had just raised the latch of the door with his key, when he distinctly heard the shout of

"Fire! fire! fire! fire!"

A moment afterward it came again.

The next instant Ned Carson was bounding back like an antelope, while he took up the alarm in his clear, full voice, and repeated the cry of "Fire! fire! fire!" as he ran.

The engine was already abroad, and a dozen men were on their way before it, tugging lustily, when Ned came up and seized the rope.

"Way with her, boys!" he shouted, sharply, as he joined them. "Now, with a will! Roll her along! Hi, lads! Heave her on! Now she goes—way with her!"

Down the road they dashed, right merrily, for a faint glimmer of light could be seen ahead, against the dark sky, and they had not mistaken the direction of the burning.

The crowd was joined, one after another, by young and old, hurrying boisterously along, when a new comer approached from the direction of the light, shouting as he came on:

"Hurry on, lads! Away, with her. Can't get there too soon!"

"Where's the fire?" asked Ned, hurriedly.

"Old Captain Blount's house," replied the other. "It's all ablaze. See!"

And Ned's heart fluttered palpably as he glanced up the street and saw the flames and smoke shooting out of the middle-storey front windows of the mansion where, thirty minutes previously, he had bidden pretty Katrina Delorme good-night.

Arriving at the scene of the conflagration, the engine was instantly brought into service, but it required several minutes to get it fairly under way.

Meantime Ned was busy everywhere, and the fire was raging furiously within the building.

On a sudden it occurred to him to inquire whether the family were out of the burning house, when he learned, to his horror, that Captain Blount was yet in his bedroom, up two flights of stairs, and that the smoke was so stifling that his apartment could not be approached.

"Up with the long ladder!" shouted Ned. "Here, on this side. Give me an axe. Lively now!"

And the next minute the young locksmith had mounted to the top of it.

The shutters of the window were closed. With one or two quick, sharp blows, he opened his way, and jumping in at the window he disappeared from the view of the workers and watchers below.

It chanced that Ned knew something of the interior of the house.

He found his way readily into Captain Blount's chamber, though the smoke from below stairs nearly choked him.

But he was used to both smoke and smut, he said. He found and seized the old gentleman in his strong arms, and dragged him out into the hall.

"Come!" he cried. "You're all right, now, old fellow; this way."

And by dint of dragging, lifting, and coaxing, he brought the half-smothered invalid to the air, at the window, where he was seen by the firemen below.

In a twinkling two brawny-limbed men mounted the ladder.

Ned aided the clumsy captain out, steadied his shoulders, while the others guided his feet upon the ladder-rounder, and the cripple came to the ground in safety, though he good-naturedly declared that "that rollicking young locksmith had nearly shaken the life as well as the rheumatism out of him in his kindly endeavours to save him."

"All the rest are safe?" asked Ned, when Captain Blount had been removed from farther jeopardy, and he was thunderstruck to hear the query at that moment.

"What became of her?"

"Who?" shouted Ned, wildly.

"The girl—Katrina!"

"Where is she?" shouted Ned.

"Can't find her," answered somebody. "The

others are all out, but she hasn't been seen since she started upstairs to help the old man out."

Ned flew up the ladder again, sprang through the window he had just come out at, near which no fire had yet been seen, and forced his way into old Blount's chamber again.

The heat and smoke were now fearful indeed. He groped his way along the hall, but there was no Katrin in the room when he reached it.

"Katrin! Katrin!" he shouted. "Are you here? Answer! Katrin!"

But no answer came.

"Katrin!" he cried again, as he pushed on to the other end of the long upper entry towards the staircase, crazed at the thought that his lovely companion, in her zeal to aid the crippled brother of her protector, the lightkeeper, might have sunk exhausted, or fainted, amid that choking smoke, which now had almost conquered him.

Just by the head of the staircase he stumbled over a prostrate female form that lay in the darkness across the hall.

Recovering his feet, he eagerly clasped the unconscious form in his arms, and rushed away to the open window.

"There they are!" cried the crowd from below. "Up with the other ladder, boys! Quick, too—the fire's close beside 'em!" cried the firemen as Ned appeared above with the limp body of Katrin in his arms.

Ah! how the warm heart of the young apprentice throbbed as he pressed the fragile figure to his breast and felt that he had saved her.

"Steady, boys!" he shouted. "Give us room! She's only swooned!"

And stepping out upon the ladder he descended to the ground, amid the wild hurrahs of the crowd in the street.

They bore the unconscious girl to a neighbouring house. Restoratives were applied and she shortly came to herself.

"Plucky boy!" said Captain Blount when he found himself safe. "I don't mind the hurricanes, and I've escaped many a time from sharp danger at sea. I don't like fire, though, an' this time the lad took me out o' the tightest place I ever got into."

"Brave fellow!" exclaimed Katrin, gratefully, when she learned who had been instrumental in rescuing her from her fearful peril. "Where is he?"

The boy had modestly retired, after hearing of Katrin's resuscitation, but through his coolness, bravery and prompt action the lives of Captain Blount and Katrin Delorme had been saved.

Shortly after Ned parted with Katrin that night Captain Blount had been assisted to his room. The two daughters went to their sleeping apartment, and one of the girls had placed her lighted candle on the table by the window, near the muslin curtains. The wind blew the thin fabric into the flames. In a moment the chamber was on fire—and this was the origin of the conflagration.

The old dwelling was utterly ruined. Books, pictures, furniture, all were destroyed. But no lives had been sacrificed, thanks to Ned Corson.

Luke Boissey's indentured apprentice was, indeed, the hero of the hour!

CHAPTER V.

The period of which we are now writing was in the early days of railroads.

The time of the lightkeeper was occupied so constantly in looking after matters connected with his duty that he was rarely absent from his premises, and never except for a brief space of time.

He had not been up to London for some years, and he had never yet seen a railroad or a locomotive.

Luke Boissey occasionally visited town, and twice his apprentice had accompanied him.

The locksmith did not like the busy metropolis, while Ned was charmed with all he saw there.

Katrin had been to town several times in company with the Blount girls.

They did some shopping there in the spring and autumn of each year, and Katrin was very glad to escape from the dull routine of country life.

Captain Blount was a careful, provident person, who kept his property all well insured.

Thus his loss was not so severe as it might have been from the burning of his house, which, eight months after the fire, was rebuilt in a more modern style, and furnished throughout in quite a fashionable manner.

The old sea-captain was a good-hearted man, and appreciated a kindness.

A day or two after the fire he hobbled out into his rumbling carriage and rode over to Boissey's shop.

He knew the history of the boy who had so signally served him, and he was inclined to reward

him, but he intended to do this in a practical way. When he reached the locksmith's place Ned chanced to be absent.

Captain Blount at once opened his business, for he was frank in speech and blunt in intercourse as well as in name.

"Look you, Boissey," he said, "that 'prentice o' yours is a fine fellow, and he'll make a mighty clever man. I've got a little property, and I got it after a good many hard knocks and thousands o' miles o' voyaging up an' down the big seas. I know what work is as well as you do, an' I've done more of it in my time than you'll ever do if you stay here tinkering till you're as gray as a badger and as old as Methusalem."

"Well, what of that, cap'n?" asked Boissey, roughly. "What are you driving at now?"

"You don't give the boy a chance here," said the captain. "He wants to go to London, he says, where he can branch out a little and begin to get on in the world."

"This comes o' letting the young scamp go to town and givin' him too much liberty as I have," responded Boissey. "He's talked to me about all this, and I've told him just what I now tell you. I can't go; and he shan't go away from me till he's twenty-one. He's my bounden 'prentice. I've got the papers, I've fed and clothed and housed him three years and up'ards, and he's got three years more yet to serve out his time afore he's of age."

"All right. I know that. But why don't you go to town yourself? Take him with you, of course—nobody can prevent that—and with his talents and assistance you can make money, and give the boy a chance for his future. You never'll be nothing here, nor he either," suggested Blount.

"I've been comfortable, an' I've got a livin' here at my trade, over twenty year, an' I shall die here, Cap'n Blount. I shan't go to London, an' the boy'll stay with me till he's twenty-one, if you let him alone, and he don't run away. If he does that, I'll go arter him with a stick. He knows me, cap'n."

"I daresay he does. I shan't advise him to run off; you needn't fear that. But I come to you to suggest what would be for your advantage as well as his, and I want to do something for this lad, who saved my life at the fire."

Upon this announcement Boissey pricked his ears up and became a little more tractable. He thought he saw something tangible in the old mariner's offer, and it mollified him directly.

"Fact is," said Boissey, "I ain't no means to go away from this place. I got along here, after my poor fashion, and contrive to make both ends meet, first or last, by hard work. I can't afford to quit here and go to town to venture on experiments. Fifty year is fifty year, cap'n! I'm too old to run any risk now, and it would cost money to move, and get new tools and things, in a new place, so I could compete with London workers in my callin'."

"How much would it cost you now?" queried the captain, pleasantly.

"A good bit o' money, I can tell you. Besides, rents is high there, and livin' is dear."

"You could get more work, and of a much better class, couldn't you?"

"Mebby so, an' mebbly not. It's a risk."

"What'll it cost to try it, Boissey? Come! I'll advance the boy whatever is necessary to fit up a good shop in London, and give him money for a year's rent, to begin with, if you'll make the trial, and give Ned a chance to spread himself a little."

"What's his'n is mine, cap'n, you know, till he's twenty-one. You can't advance him anything while he's a minor. He's my boy till he's free, an' I don't 'low no interference, you know," replied Boissey.

"I understand. Now what'll it cost? And you shall have the money. On'y give him the chance that his talents will command in so much better a channel."

"I don't know," muttered Boissey, calculatingly. "This idea is new to me. I'll think it over, and talk with Bess, my wife, an' I'll see you ag'in. But I don't want that boy's head filled with this. I'll see. Here he comes. No more now."

"Hullo, captain!" shouted Ned, entering the little shop at this juncture. "How's the rheumatics to-day?"

"Better, youngster. Your master tells me you've been up to London lately."

"Yes, cap'n. I had a nice time too. I went all over town and saw all the sights. Nice place—lots of trade there—and plenty of work for them that knows how to do it. I like London. One of these fine days I'll go there to live, I hope, cap'n—when I get through here."

"Come, boy, hurry now with that job o' Parker's; they're waiting for it," said his master, sharply. "Did you get the safe open?"

"Easy as fallin' off a log."

"Without breakin' the lock, boy?"

"Yes, indeed."

Boissey was not a little nettled at this success of his apprentice, for he had spent a whole day in his attempts to open a gentleman's strong box, of which the key had been mislaid or lost.

Ned went at this work systematically, and in two hours he had accomplished what Boissey could never have done at all without destroying the lock.

Old Captain Blount smiled when the young man briefly explained what he had been called on to do, and learned how promptly he had done it.

He complimented the lad in his quiet, familiar way, and then spoke of matters in no way connected with the object of his real visit that day to Boissey, who feared the captain's influence and the effect his good will might have upon Ned.

After a few other remarks in his customary jocose vein, the old captain retired, reiterating his thanks and obligations to Ned for the timely service he had rendered him at the fire.

"My regards to the young ladies, cap'n. I hope they are well," said the lad as he left.

"All right, Ned. Come and see us when we get settled. We're stayin' now at a neighbour's. The house'll be put up again very soon, an' we'll have many a good time of it yet—eh?"

"I hope so, cap'n. But I advise you to establish your sleeping-room on the ground-floor."

"Ha, ha! Yes. Good advice—if the infernal rheumatics stick to me. However, I used to think, after my 'scapes from flood and gale, 'Old Blount, you weren't born to be drown'd.' Now I believe I was't born to be burned alive, thanks to your pluck, young man. But, good-bye. Come an' see us. The girls will always be glad to make you welcome."

Boissey was uncommunicative, but unusually pleasant, that day.

He kept up a "terrible thinking."

"I don't know but it 'ud be a good thing," he said to his wife, that night, after explaining to her dull ear what the captain had proposed. "If he'd come down handsome, I think I'd try it on; and I've no doubt, as he says, that it 'ud be for the best in the end. This boy's getting on pretty fast, I can tell you, Bess. He can turn out a better piece o' fine lock-work than ever I could do in my best days—and his work is allers preferred to mine up at the factory. I don't know but I may go up to London arter all," he concluded.

Cross-grained Bess, his wife, couldn't see through it yet. She was wedded to country life and the old groves around her tumble-down cottage by the sea.

But Boissey turned it over in his mind, and finally broached the subject in a gingerly way to his apprentice, who was vastly delighted at this sudden change in his master's plans for the future.

"You see, Ned, my boy, there's a power of good jobbin' to be done in London."

"I always told you that, sir."

"I know you did. But you don't know nothing. What do you know except what I've told you, eh?"

"Not much, I'm aware, sir."

"No—nothing," persisted his employer.

"Still, as I said, there's a deal o' work that we can't get here which we'd be likely to get our share of if we was there."

"No doubt of that, sir."

"But I'm gettin' old, and I don't like to move away. Only for your sake, boy, and to help you to get forward, would I consent to break up here."

"Thank you, sir. I appreciate your good will, and I'll work the harder to deserve your favour."

"That's right. That's as it should be. I've housed and fed and clothed you three years—and given you a good trade. You ought to be grateful, and do your best for the balance o' the time for which you are bound to me according to law."

"And I will, sir."

"Well, I don't know but I may conclude by and by to try London. You'll have better advantages there. You can see good books in the libraries on mechanics, hydraulics, neomatics, and so forth; and you can learn a deal out o' books, as well as in practice at work."

"I know it, sir. And I'm very glad you have determined to go, for I know you can make money by this change."

"I haven't decided yet, Ned. Your missus don't like the idea. She ain't agreeable to it."

"I never knew when she was agreeable to anything," thought Ned, but he didn't utter this sentence.

He kept himself busy, continued to encourage the locksmith's talked-of plan, and, though he could not understand why he had changed his mind, fancied that his own arguments had brought this change about.

CHAPTER VI.

NED CORSON, the locksmith's sharp-witted apprentice, could pull a good stroke oar, he could make a

very fair argument in his way at the debating club, he was ready and prompt in danger, and was known to be a skilful and excellent mechanic. But the boy had never had the opportunity to acquire much knowledge of equine exercise, or of the animal itself, and so what Ned knew about horse-flesh was of no very great account.

Still, in the course of his experience, and during his frequent calls at the nice old mansion-house of Captain Blount, he had latterly been a privileged visitor in all respects, for the captain was very grateful to him, and insisted that Ned should "make himself at home" always.

"There's the horses in the barn, Ned," he would say, "and the girls love to go riding around the country whenever they can find company. Here's Katrin too. She's a nice horsewoman, an' can ride like Diana, the huntress!"

There were other young sparks about who could ride, and Ned had noticed the growing attentions toward Katrin of one or two of the boys who were invited from time to time to join the equestrian parties.

"I'm not much of a horseman anyhow," said Ned to his friend. "I'm not clever in the saddle, I know—but I can manage even that after my fashion."

Ned Corson was not one of the kind that liked to be excelled in any of the sports his mates indulged in. And so, after a time, he got to be a very fair rider, and enjoyed the exercise vastly when he could get away from the shop. Katrin rode splendidly. She sometimes put Blount's horses to their mettle, and not unfrequently astonished her companions with her dashing equestrianism.

Captain Blount had had an eye for the "points" in a horse in his younger years, and the three or four animals he now kept for the family's use were good ones.

"Prince," as he called the youngest in his stable, was a good-sized roan, an excellent road beast and Katrin's favourite for the saddle. But he was often headstrong, and always liked to have his own way when he could.

But, though he was mischievous sometimes, and wilful, he could never unseat pretty Katrin.

One fine, clear afternoon Ned got leave of absence from work, and joined a little riding party got up by the Blount girls and Katrin together.

He hired a very good saddle-horse for his own use on this occasion at the livery-stable, and three hours before sundown the happy quartette—one of the captain's daughters and a gentleman friend, Katrin and Ned—started away from the mansion in high glee for a spurt through the valley to the beach and back.

The gallant old sea-captain was able to be about in fine weather now, and he had taken care to see that all was right about the saddle and head-gear of Prince that day, for he knew this beast was unruly at times.

So, after seeing Katrin's little foot snugly placed in the stirrup, and looking to girth, curb and snaffle, the old fellow said, gallantly:

"All right, Miss Katrin. Have a good time now. Look sharp after Prince. He's got a mischievous eye, a'most as bright as your own. An' he'll take the bit any day, you know."

"Never fear, captain—I know him."

"He's pretty fresh to-day though, miss. Ah, here comes our brave boy, Ned. And well mounted too. That's Maine's Blucher—eh, boy?"

"Yes, sir. A very good one," replied Ned.

"Yes. That's so. But he carries a strong head too. Look out now, all of you, and get home afore dark."

"By-by!" shouted Katrin, leading off, with Ned close to her nag's flank.

"Good luck," cried Blount, and away they went.

The horseback party were in fine spirits. The afternoon was lovely and they were very happy.

They all went away for five miles in company—crossing the large fields and open commons beyond the village.

Then to and up and down the beach, and finally turned back homeward as the sun was declining brilliantly in the West.

The horses that Captain Blount's daughter and her friend rode did duty in the family carriage, and were not so speedy as the others, though the one the young gentleman bestrode was the best roadster.

Ned and Katrin were some distance in advance of the other couple, dashing along at a sharp hand-gallop, when, at an angle in the narrow road, a stray white ox suddenly thrust his head from a low brush and frightened Katrin's beast.

Prince leaped into the air and bounded away like a bullet from a rifle.

But Katrin grasped her rein firmly and kept her seat, though this mad animal dashed off at a fearful pace—over road, field and dale—until the girl suddenly felt an unusual jerk in her bridle-hand; and

to her consternation discovered that the links of the snaffle-bit in Prince's mouth had parted clean in the middle, and the reins were drawn away outside of his jaws.

The beast was free now beyond control. Away he flew.

"Mercy!" shouted Katrin, affrighted for the first time in her life. "Mercy, Ned! My bit is gone!"

Ned quickly appreciated the great peril that poor Katrin was now in.

The locksmith's boy knew many things, but he knew very little about a horse.

He followed sharply in Katrin's wake, however, and his usual discretion in emergency served him in the end.

He shouted at the mad beast at first, and called to Katrin to hold fast to his back, and to the reins.

The more he strove to reach the animal's head, and the louder poor Katrin screamed amid her terror, the faster sped the roan as he bolted from side to side, and half a dozen times nearly dashed the girl out of the saddle.

Still she clung bravely to the high pommel and the reins. But she was momentarily growing weaker and weaker from the terrible excitement and exertion to which she found herself subjected in that mad race.

They had left their two companions far behind, and on they went.

Katrin, pale as a lily, still clung like a drowning woman to reins and pommel, when a broad ditch suddenly lay right before them, which they had all crossed at a bound on their way out, two hours previously.

Now, after miles of racing, it was doubtful if the fagged brutes would pass it safely. It was a desperate moment.

"We must clear that ditch, Katrin," shouted Ned, wildly. "Courage, girl! Let him go! Once across that gap I'll help you then! Make him take the ditch!" he cried, plunging his rowels into his horse's flanks.

"Take care!" he added to his own beast.

"Hi—over, Prince!" screamed Katrin.

"Over!" shouted Ned.

The two horses bounded side by side clean across the ditch, as if the twain had been but one.

Katrin at length grew faint, and reeled in her saddle.

In vain had Ned essayed to check her steed, or to get near enough to her flank to risk the attempt to lift her from her seat.

"Never say die, Katrin. Hold hard! Cheery—girl! Hang on!" shrieked Ned. "Look sharp!"

He closed up the space between them.

"Now, Katrin! loose your foot from the stirrup—easy! Now!" he cried.

And driving his spur again into Blucher's side, he pressed him towards the fainting girl, clasped her stoutly about the waist, and deftly lifted her sinking form safe and clear from the mad beast, that, relieved of his burden, dashed away towards his stable—now within sight—the door of which he reached only to fall never to rise again.

The animal had ruptured a blood-vessel, and died ere Katrin and Ned Corson reached the mansion-house.

But the girl was saved!

Ned's horse was quickly brought to a halt, as he gently lowered Katrin to the ground and sprang down beside her to congratulate her upon this lucky escape.

Captain Blount from his parlour window had seen the two horses madly coming home, and had noted Ned's act in relieving the girl from her peril.

He was very quickly on the spot where the two young people stood after Prince flew away riderless; and the terrified but not seriously harmed young horse-woman was at once escorted to the captain's house.

CHAPTER VII.

Ned continued studiously at work and constantly improved in his knowledge of mechanism, especially as it was applicable to the details of lock-smithery.

His visits to the lightkeeper's premises had been kept up, and he passed many an agreeable evening there, in Katrin's company, for after the fright she experienced with Captain Blount's young horse the pretty maiden, whom the apprentice had come to regard so affectionately, spent her time mostly at home. During these pleasant interviews at the little dwelling of the girl's protector the youthful couple often talked over their adventures, their past and their future, but neither of them ever spoke of love. They were entirely innocent of any feeling save the childish affection that had grown up between them.

Ned Corson very well knew that his prospects in life did not warrant any allusion to graver matters; while Katrin felt that she was but a poor orphan entirely dependent upon the lightkeeper.

The lad had frequently noticed, and more than

once had cursorily examined the old iron-bound teak-wood chest that had stood in the low room of Blount's house as long back as Katrin could remember.

And he took a strange interest in it.

It was a curious contrivance, that ancient, dark, clumsy trunk.

He had learned from the lightkeeper all he knew about it.

It was long, narrow and deep, and massively put together—a veritable curiosity.

"That chest," said Ned, jokingly, "must have been built in the year one; and not unlikely good old Uncle Noah, or some of his immediate successors, may have had it in the Ark, or had a hand in its construction."

"It did me a good turn, nevertheless," replied Katrin, smiling at Ned's allusion to the old-fashioned article. "My whole fortune came with me, when Father Blount found me in that very chest, Neddy," she continued, thoughtfully, "it was washed ashore and contained the wearing apparel devoted to my convenience for some years after I was saved. It no doubt belonged to my mother, as we have every reason to infer from subsequent occurrences."

"Yes; she was lost at sea," said Ned.

"Undoubtedly; I never knew, of course. But all the circumstances of my rescue point in that direction."

These allusions called up disagreeable reminiscences, and Ned pleasantly turned the conversation.

"It's nicely put together, nevertheless, Katrin," he said, "and so strongly built that it would admirably serve the needs of a commercial traveller upon the railways now-a-days. The 'baggage-smashers' of to-day would find this trunk a tough customer to demolish, I reckon, eh?"

Then the young locksmith raised the lid of the antique chest and peered into its interior as he had previously done many times.

The inside was curiously arranged with drawers, recesses, compartments, and slides; and the especial attention of the lad was for the first time on this occasion called to the lock of the trunk.

"I never observed this before," he said to Katrin, as he turned the chest up on its side.

"What is it, Ned?"

"The lock here. Who opened this chest the first time?"

"Your employer, old Boissey, I have heard Father Blount say. There was no key found, and Boissey couldn't fit one to it with all his skill and knowledge of his trade; nor could he break or pick it open, so you see the lid was forced off at the top. Here are the twisted tongs which he was compelled to separate at last to get into it," said Katrin, explaining the fact as the lightkeeper had done to her.

It was a very large, thick lock, with a steel outer cover, and Ned at once asked permission to remove it. He suddenly conceived an important idea, suggested by the discovery he had just made. When old Blount came in he said:

"We have been looking at the old chest here, sir. It is a curious affair."

"Well, do you find anything new in it?" queried the lightkeeper.

"No. I imagine there is nothing new to be found in it," said Ned.

"Not much, I think. It was old enough when it fell into my hands; and I'm sure I've never made any additions to it."

"No, I suppose not."

"It has stood in that corner, undisturbed, save when you and Katrin have chosen to overhaul it, for upwards of a dozen years, my lad. What have you discovered to-night?"

"Nothing, except that this lock seems a remarkable one."

"Yes. Old Boissey found it one too many for him, I remember, and he is counted a good locksmith in these parts."

"Yes. Katrin has told me about it. Is there any objection to its removal, sir?"

"What! The old chest? Oh, yes. I'll never part with that, though it's of no mortal use to anybody. But it contained Katrin's little all when I got it, and I—"

"I speak of the lock only. This is in my line, you know. I would like to examine that at my leisure, in the shop. And I will return it all sound and safely again."

"Ay, you may take the lock, if you like, but not the chest."

"Thank you," said Ned, gratified with the old man's reply. For just then a thought had entered his brain which he was bound to work out to a successful termination.

Excusing himself to Katrin, the young apprentice proceeded at once to the locksmith's shop, and provided himself with tools to remove the lock from the teak-wood chest.

It was not so easy a job as he imagined it would be, but after some trouble Ned got it off. When he left the house he took it with him to his little attic chamber.

Here, by the light of his farthing candle, the apprentice examined this singular piece of mechanism, which he found to be a sample of rare workmanship indeed in the way of a chest-lock.

For a considerable time prior to this the locksmith's shrewd apprentice had quietly occupied his leisure upon a piece of work which—when he brought it to the state of perfection he aimed at—he intended to astonish old Boisey with; and he hoped to make so good a job of it as to give him fame, perhaps, in his future, as well as pecuniary advancement.

He was compelled to do this out of his jealous employer's sight. Boisey had frequently given the lad to understand that he "belonged to him until he was free."

If he did anything outside of his ordinary day's labour, for pay, he was taught from the outset that the remuneration was Boisey's—not his.

"For don't I feed and clothe and house you?" his grasping employer would ask. "And are you not regularly 'bound' to me till you're come to a man?"

Ned knew all this. So what he was now engaged upon he kept to himself—and never hinted to anybody that he fancied he had "hit the nail squarely on the head" in this last work, to the completion of which he devoted all his spare time, all his energy, and all his talents.

When he found himself alone in his little dormitory he carefully turned the mysteriously contrived chest-lock to the light, and cautiously examined its construction.

It was exquisitely put together. Ned pored over this curiosity in mechanism, and noted its nicely working tumbler, lever, balance, spring, cog, and guard; and never before had he seen anything of its kind so artistically contrived.

The principle embodied in the absolute security of this lock was precisely what he had long been studying to attain. It was novel, certain, practical, ingenious, and not over complicated.

"Eureka! I have found it at last!" he mentally exclaimed, that night, before he went to sleep.

And when the morning broke he rose with the determination to "make his mark"—if he lived long enough—as an expert in the vocation of locksmith.

Fortunately for the boy, his naturally jealous employer entertained not the slightest suspicion of Ned's purpose.

It was necessary, sometimes, to bring parts of the machine he was at work on into the shop—to the lathe, or otherwise.

But Boisey did not observe this, and time he did not disturb his apprentice in his labours upon it.

It grew into shape by slow degrees. It was no child's undertaking. It required nice care and rare skill in its adjustment.

The boy applied himself in earnest, however, to the task he had voluntarily set himself.

"I can do it," he said, mentally. "It is here now."

He tapped his manly forehead with his forefinger confidently.

"There is no such thing in existence yet, I believe, as I can produce by the combinations I have conceived and the improvements I can add to this excellent arrangement. I have it, sure! But the old man must know nothing of this at present," he concluded.

(To be continued.)

DIAMOND CUTTING.—This business has always been confined to a small number of hands, and though there are diamond cutters in London the bulk of the work is performed by the Dutch at Amsterdam. The master cutters have enjoyed two years of wonderful prosperity, which the men have now resolved to share. We hear that workmen refuse to instruct apprentices, and are constantly insisting on a rise in their own pay; and it is said that ordinary journeymen cutters are earning 10*l.*, and more skilled hands 20*l.* per week, or even more. The charges for cutting are now as much as 2*s.* per carat on the weight of the rough stone, instead of 12*s.* or 14*s.* The monopoly the cutters possess is being made the most of by them, and the workmen now often refuse to cut the very small stones at any price. The "waste" in cutting varies according to the shape of the rough stone, and it frequently happens that in order to remove a flaw or spot, and so produce a more perfect brilliant, it is deemed advisable to cut away large pieces from the original rough block. These cuttings are called "cleavage," and if from good stones are valuable, as they are easily made into small brilliant or rose diamonds. The practice of diamond cutters varies a good deal

as to the cleavage, some keeping it (as a tailor would cuttings off cloth sent to him to make up) while others are conscientious enough to return it. A skilful diamond cleaver commands far higher wages as a workman than a mere outcutter or polisher, as on his judgment of each rough stone depends the form and size of the brilliant.

SPRAGGINS'S VENTRILOQUISM.

WHEN Spraggins found out he was a ventriloquist he did more mischief than a schoolful of boys. He couldn't rest a minute without plaguing somebody. He would go through the markets and scare old women by making their fish talk, or their chickens sing, or their pigs laugh, or their turkeys grunt; and he would make it appear that a horse standing by had swallowed a baby, by throwing his voice into the animal's stomach and making the baby cry. Sometimes he would cause a perfectly sober and serious man to seem so drunk that a policeman would be ready to carry him off. Often Spraggins would kick up a row at a political meeting and bring the proceedings to an end. But Spraggins's talent lay stronger in one direction than any other, and that was in imitating dogs and cats. His cats were perfect. He could do all kinds—a big yellow tom with a bad cold, a tortoise-shell tabby mewing to get in at the window on a stormy day, or a little kitten hunting for her ma—in short any sort of cat.

It was some time before Spraggins turned this special direction of his genius to any good account. At length one night an idea struck him just as he was blowing out his light to go to bed. He remembered old Bobbins next door. Old Bobbins was a bachelor, and hated children and cats and noisy things generally worse than poison, so Bobbins was the very man to put up a joke on. Spraggins slipped downstairs, got over the fence, fixed the gate so as Bobbins couldn't get him, crept under the shadow of the old man's window, in a spot safe from missiles, and Spraggins commenced.

His voice was just in tune, and he led off with the big yellow tom. It was a low, moaning wail, almost like a cracked trombone. Far and wide the dismal yowls resounded, and Spraggins hardly left off to take breath.

Presently up went old Bobbins's window wrathfully, and a head in a night cap was poked out.

"Confound that cat!" said an angry voice. "I can't close my eyes. Scat! Sh! Scat!"

Spraggins was all doubled up with laughter; but recovering as well as he could he ceased his voice to retreat with two or three disappointed yowls, as if the big yellow tom was going away.

Then Bobbins slammed down the window and returned to bed.

About the time he was comfortably settled Spraggins commenced again—this time with the tabby, whose tones were soprano. It was anguish to hear them, and presently up went the window again, out popped old Bobbins's head.

"Scat! I wish I could see you. Take that, anyhow!" and Bobbins hurried down a bootjack.

Spraggins answered with a mournful whine.

"Sh! Scat!" cried Bobbins, endeavouring to penetrate the darkness. "I'll put poison in the yard to-morrow, if I live."

Another excruciating mean from Spraggins.

"You're there, are you?" said Bobbins, in a fury.

"Scat, scat!" and flung a blacking-brush at the invisible cat.

Spraggins gave a squeal as if the animal had been hit, and a sound followed as of claws scratching up a wall.

"Gone this time," commented Bobbins. "I hope I've broken its back."

Down went the window once more.

Two or three minutes passed, and then Spraggins started up with big tom again in his deep bass.

Tabby responded in her diurnal soprano. Then both tried several bars together.

The effect was hideous enough to have made your hair stand on an end. For the third time the window was thrown up and old Bobbins's head thrust out.

"This is really maddening. I shall be out of my senses before morning. Puss, puss, puss!"

Spraggins gave a few more bars of the duet.

"Two of 'em!" muttered Bobbins, nearly frantic.

"They're getting ready for a fight, and a nice rumput we shall have presently. I'll fix 'em this time sure."

As he said this he dashed down a pithier of water, but no sooner had the crockery broken than Spraggins echoed it with a long low howl.

"Missed, by Jove!" said Bobbins. "I wish I had a seven-barrelled revolver. I'd be certain to hit with one barrel now."

Spraggins now began to make things lively.

The two cats yowled and spat and snarled until the racket was fearful to listen to.

"This is pleasant," groaned Bobbins. "I'll have to go down and drive 'em out. Atchew! I'm sneezing already, and to-morrow I shan't be able to speak."

The light disappeared, and Spraggins thought it was time to be getting back over the fence.

He did so, and from his window saw poor old Bobbins in a very airy night garment creeping about his yard endeavouring to find the two cats, and all the time muttering like a fore-castle full of sailors.

Well, Spraggins nearly worried that old man to death.

Every night, as regularly as eleven o'clock came, Spraggins gave his cat duet in Bobbins's yard, and Bobbins vociferated and flung hair-brushes, shaving-cups, empty ale-bottles, inkstands, and all sorts of things, until there was scarcely anything left in the room.

But Spraggins's joke was too good to be kept to himself, and finally he invited a few friends to come one night and enjoy it with him.

They took up position in Spraggins's chamber about eleven o'clock, and Spraggins, in the highest kind of spirits, divested himself of his shoes, slipped downstairs and over the fence, as usual, into Bobbins's yard.

Everybody was primed for the jolliest kind of a laugh, and Spraggins was determined that they should not be disappointed.

His first proceeding was to bar old Bobbins in by piling up various things against the kitchen door.

This done, Spraggins crept under the window, and made signs to his friends to be attentive.

Then he began.

He let out a wild "m-e-e-ow" and listened.

He was on his hands and knees, and everything was quiet as death.

Then he followed the first with a second "meow," and supplemented that with the full duet between the big yellow tom and the melancholy tabby.

The racket was infernal, and just at its height up went a window and Bobbins's voice cried:

"Now, Towzer, now, boy, now!"

Something grasped Spraggins by the neck of his pants, and he felt as if he had sat upon about nineteen spikes.

He gave one terrific yell for help.

A big dog had sprung upon him and was hastily and excitedly gnawing him. And if he didn't keep on yelling I wouldn't say so.

He hallooed for Bobbins, and Bobbins, now perceiving the whole thing at a glance, hurried down. But he was stopped at the kitchen door; and all the while the big dog was dipping his grinders into Spraggins's legs.

"Come to me, Mr. Bobbins," shrieked Spraggins; "come to me!"

"Unbar the door and I'll come to you soon enough," said Bobbins.

Spraggins jerked away the things as hurriedly as he could, and Bobbins, came in hand, sprung forth. He drove the dog away, it is true; but he let into Spraggins with that stick until the ventriloquist was black and blue from head to foot. Spraggins's friends thought it about the best joke they had ever heard of. They thank him heartily for the entertainment whenever they meet him, and press him to repeat the performance. But Spraggins has given up ventriloquism now.

N. G. T.

RED HELM.

CHAPTER X.

The savage demons prowling round the shore
With foul intent the stranded barque explore,
Deaf to the voice of woe, her decks they board,
While tardy Justice slumbers o'er her sword.

THE splashing of the man's body as it fell in the water was drowned by the noises on deck, and also by the heavy thumping of the ship against the rocks as she rose and fell.

Brenton, glancing up at the open companion-way to make sure that no other person was about entering the cabin, now hastened back toward the main hold, to find Faith anxiously awaiting his return, her hand upon the hatch, which she held open.

"You should not have opened that hatch," said he. "Do you not know that in case the Malays had come into the cabin, and thence passed into the main hold, they would have seen that open hatch the first thing?"

"Perhaps they would," answered Faith, "but it would have mattered little to me; for, had I seen them coming this way I would have known that you had been killed, and life to me then would have been worth little, as—"

She paused, blushing deeply, perceiving that her feelings had carried her too far.

Brenton looked at her steadily, his eyes through the darkness flashing love and tenderness.

He entered the hold, carefully closing the hatch

above him, which he had scarcely done when the noise made by the pirates pouring into the cabin was heard.

"This way," said Brenton, crawling toward a pile of barrels in one corner. "We can hide ourselves behind those for the present. The Malays, not suspecting our presence aboard, will not long continue the search."

The three ensconced themselves behind the barrels, where they remained silent and nearly motionless.

Meanwhile they could hear above them the footsteps and distinguished the voices of the Malays as they moved hither and thither about the hold.

"They think the vessel is deserted," whispered Faith, "as I thought they would. They have no suspicion that we are aboard. They are, however, wondering as to what became of one of their number who first boarded the vessel when the boat was alongside."

"Ay," whispered Brenton; "I forgot to tell you that I had a combat with a Malay—the very fellow they miss, doubtless, down there in the cabin, which was ended by my knocking him senseless and throwing his body through the cabin window into the sea."

"I am afraid that may lead to our discovery," said Faith, "unless it should happen that they did not find the body."

Just then a ray of light penetrating the lower hold betokened the hatch was opened.

The next moment several Malays entered through the hatch.

"What do they say?" whispered Brenton to Faith.

"They say that the ship does not seem to have as good a cargo as they supposed she would."

"Do they still think she is deserted?"

"Yes."

"That is well. Our next step will be to leave the vessel."

"It will be difficult," answered Faith, "as these people have quick ears."

"We will contrive some means to get away," said Brenton.

As the words escaped him he heard the Malays leaving the hold.

"I am glad they are gone," he whispered, "as I am dreadfully cramped up in this narrow place."

He crawled from behind the barrels as he spoke, followed by Faith and the cabin boy.

Suddenly they heard a cry of horror on deck.

"They say the shark has got him," said Faith; "doubtless meaning the body of the man whom you launched overboard."

"Then we will not be discovered through that," said Brenton, "as they will doubtless suppose the man fell off the ship and was seized by the shark while he was striving to swim back toward the vessel."

"It is to be hoped so," answered Faith.

She listened attentively to what was said on deck.

"It is as you suppose," said she. "They believe the man fell overboard. They are saying that he must have been swimming toward the ship when he was seized by the shark."

Brenton with his usual recklessness lifted the hatch, and having glanced round him to make sure the hold was deserted, he passed on to the cabin, which he found also deserted.

Peering through the window, he beheld a sight which sent a thrill of horror to his heart.

Just under her stern a huge shark's fin suddenly clove the water, the creature holding in its mouth a human head, that of the Malay whom Brenton had thrown overboard.

Nothing could have been more horrible than the spectacle.

The hair of the head hanging in coarse, black masses about the forehead and the glazed eyeballs were stained with blood, while the mouth was twisted to one side in a manner which gave to the face the aspect of that of some goblin from the dark caves of the sea.

Brenton turned away shuddering.

At the same moment he heard the steps of some of the ship's occupants approaching the companion-way.

He would not have time to pass the staircase without being seen, the savage Malays being near the opening.

What should he do?

Several times he asked himself this question, and at length he concluded to stow himself in the run, which opened in the centre of the cabin floor.

Quickly opening the hatch, he descended into the run, just as he caught sight of the feet of the Malays upon the companion steps.

As he cautiously closed the hatch he heard the Malays coming down the steps.

A minute later they had entered the cabin and were moving about over his head.

He had just time to dart to one side and conceal himself behind some piled coils of rigging, when he

heard the run hatch opened, and saw several of his enemies enter.

A moment they stood conversing in low tones, in a manner which made him almost suspect that they had heard the slight rustling sound he had made on concealing himself behind the rigging.

Then they slowly approached the spot where he lay, glancing carefully round them as they did so.

Discovery seemed inevitable, and the young man, compressing his lips and grasping his dagger firmly, resolved that he would not die without a struggle.

Nearer came the Malays every moment, and Brenton was about preparing to rise and confront them when one of them, stumbling and falling, struck against the very coil of rigging behind which he was concealed.

The consequence was that the whole mass toppled over, falling above and around the person of the young sailor, effectually concealing him from the gaze of the natives.

He lay perfectly still, for it occurred to him that perhaps the Malays had not seen him, and were entirely ignorant of his presence in the run.

In fact, such seemed to be the case; for the pirates, seating themselves on a coil of rigging directly over Brenton, continued their conversation, which evidently had no reference to him. At length they arose and left the run, closing without fastening the hatch behind them.

"Gone!" muttered the young man, joyfully. "I may soon venture to return to the hold, where I left my two friends."

He crawled under the hatch, and, applying his ear thereto, listened attentively.

The murmur of voices was audible above him for several minutes; then he heard the sound of the Malay footsteps moving up the companion stairs.

"Now is my time," he thought, and at once left the run.

Entering the cabin, he moved to the hold, where, as before, he found Faith anxiously awaiting him.

"I am so glad to see you safe," muttered the young woman. "I heard voices in the cabin, and was so afraid they would find you—although from what they said I knew they did not suspect your presence there."

Brenton then described his narrow escape.

"You were fortunate," said Faith. "It is seldom a Malay gets so near an enemy without discovering him."

Brenton now remained in the upper hold, listening to the noises heard on deck.

"I believe some of them are taking to a boat," said he. "I've half a mind to take a look on deck."

"Not yet," said Faith, in alarm, "as there would be great danger of your being discovered were you to do so. It is not likely they have all left the ship."

In fact voices were now heard in the fore-castle, showing that many of the pirates were there.

Faith suddenly turned deadly pale and clutched Brenton by the arms.

"What is the matter?" inquired he.

"They intend to blow up the ship," answered Faith.

"It seems they discovered kegs of gunpowder down in the run."

"I saw them myself," said the young man, "and I now comprehend what they were talking about there so earnestly."

"Yes," remarked Faith; "they first intend to take out the better part of the vessel's cargo, then blow her up."

"We must contrive to get out of the ship before they do that," said Brenton. "I think we can manage to do so when night comes. There will then be less chance of their seeing us, while it is not likely they will blow up the vessel until to-morrow."

"They have sharp eyes," said the young woman, "and I doubt if we shall be able to get away without being seen."

"Ay, but you must bear in mind that their not suspecting we are here will give us an advantage."

The party remained in the hold all day long. At night they heard the voices of the Malays, who had been employed the greater part of the day in hoisting out the cargo.

"They have got out all they intend to," said Faith, "and they purpose to blow up the ship to-morrow morning."

"During the night, then, we must contrive to get away," answered Brenton.

In a few minutes the Malays were heard returning on deck.

"Now is our time," said Brenton, "before they have had time to set watches."

"Yes; we had better start now," said Faith.

"How do you propose to leave the ship?"

"By crawling through the cabin window on to the rocks of the reef," said Brenton. "Thence we can doubtless easily make our way ashore."

"Yes, the water cannot be very deep between the rocks and the beach."

"We shall have to wait our chance, however, as I have noticed that the ship does not always lie with her stern on to the rocks. As we have no time to lose we had better make for the cabin at once."

Accordingly the trio left the hold and soon gained the cabin. Looking through the window, Brenton discovered that it was a dark night, although, far away to the eastward, a faint gleaming betokened that the moon would soon rise.

The ship, as Brenton had feared might be the case, did not at present lie with her stern on the rocks.

The party must therefore wait until she should swing round.

This took place ten minutes later.

The ship came up in a blast of wind, and her stern struck one of the sunken rocks with a force which made her tremble.

"Now," said Brenton, as he crawled through the window, holding out his hand to Faith, "come."

She was about doing so when a rushing sound was heard down the companion steps, followed by a deep, half-smothered roar, and, glancing through the window, Brenton was horrified on beholding the lion, Brave, dashing into the cabin.

Faith, turning at the same moment, also beheld the savage beast, which at once, seeming to know her, changed its note of anger to a sort of growl of recognition.

"Back, Brave, back!" said Faith, in a voice little above a whisper, at the same time with her hand motioning towards the companion-way.

Brave, however, stood motionless, while, as if comprehending her reasons for wishing to get rid of him, he now gave vent to a sullen roar.

"Come," repeated Brenton, "the moment you and the boy gain the rock I will close the sash, so that the lion cannot follow."

The young woman no longer hesitated.

She gave her hand to Brenton, who at once helped her on to the rock.

The cabin boy quickly followed, but he had scarcely done so when, with a crash, the lion bounded for the window.

Brenton endeavoured to close it, but ere he could do so the lion dashed through and gained the reef-rook, where it crouched at once to spring upon the young sailor.

"Away, Brave, away!" said Faith, in the same low voice as before.

But the lion did not seem willing to obey her.

With a savage roar it made a spring for Brenton, who, however, stooping and dodging to one side, just managed to avoid the beast, which now tumbled headlong into the sea.

Turning quickly, with its forepaws upon the rock, it now endeavoured to draw itself up, and had partially succeeded when Brenton plunged his dagger to the hilt in the throat of the animal.

At the same moment, their suspicions having evidently been excited by the noise made by the beast, a number of the Malays appeared at the after rail.

"Down," whispered the young man, "down, all of you!"

The little party threw themselves down, crouching behind a ridge of rock, while Brave in the water continued his death-struggles.

Meanwhile one of the Malays, leaning over the after rail, held his lantern so far out that the rays fell directly on the upturned face of our hero.

The Malay, turning to his companions, uttered some hasty words.

"You have been seen," said Faith, "and they are now going to lower a boat."

"We must make for the beach then," said Brenton.

With these words he rose and helped Faith toward land, the cabin boy following.

That their retreat was discovered soon was made manifest by the shouts of the Malays and the discharge of small arms, the sharp firing of shots being heard on all sides.

They hurried on, however, and finally gained the beach.

Meanwhile the plash of a boat as it struck the water now was heard, and soon afterwards the sound of the paddles as the light craft was being urged on her way through the sea.

"We must make good speed," said Faith, "as none are more skilful with paddles than the Malays—and they will gain the shore sooner than you suppose."

At that moment a ball of fire was seen shooting up from the ship.

"It is a signal," said Faith, "seeing which the other party will head us off."

"So I am afraid," said Brenton. "But we must do the best we can."

They hurried along, and finally came to a sort of ravine, in which there were a number of rocks.

"We can do no better," said the young sailor, as Faith, weakened by her late exertions, showed signs of being exhausted. "We must conceal ourselves here among the rocks."

"It is the best place for us," said Faith, "from the very fact of its being so near the beach, as our enemies will not suspect we would hide so near them, but, thinking we have moved farther on, will doubtless pass us."



[THE EDGE OF THE PIT.]

"Hark, here they come!" whispered the cabin boy as the gleam of a lantern now was seen not far distant.

As the boy spoke the voices of the searchers were heard.

"Can you make out what they say?" inquired Brenton.

Faith listened intently.

"Yes, now I can," said she. "At least I can hear what one of them says, and he, if I am not greatly mistaken, is Bolak."

"Do they seem to suspect that we are here?"

No. Bolak is telling them to move farther on—that we would not be likely to conceal ourselves so near the coast."

"That is well; though where we can go after we leave here is more than I can imagine."

"We must get back to the ship," said Faith, promptly.

"Back to the ship?"

"Yes; from what I can gather, all the Malays have left the vessel. There were, it seems, only a dozen who boarded her to look for us!"

The sound of steps and voices now was so near that the fugitives deemed it best to remain silent until their pursuers had passed. When they were out of hearing Brenton said:

"I am afraid our craft is now too much injured for us to undertake to go to sea aboard her."

"I do not think her hull is much injured, although the loss of nearly all her sails would of course prove a serious hindrance. I had not thought of that."

"We had better remain on the island," said Brenton. "Meanwhile we must find more comfortable quarters than these we now occupy."

So saying he left the rocky retreat, bidding the others follow.

They did so, and all soon emerged from the valley.

They moved on, without knowing whither their steps led them, and they found themselves on the beach.

Huge rocks rose on one side of them, full of caverns and hollows, which were indistinctly revealed in the pale moonlight.

"You remain here," said Brenton, "while I explore these rocks."

"Do not be gone too long," said Faith, "otherwise we may think you have met with some accident." So saying he crawled into one of the openings of the rock.

All was darkness within, but by feeling his way he ascertained that he was in a narrow passage leading straight forward.

Gradually this passage seemed to have a downward tendency.

He followed it until he found himself in a circular apartment partially lighted by an opening in the top of the rock.

Glancing round him, he now discovered an aperture in one side of the rock large enough to admit a man's body.

Through this opening he crawled, and soon found himself in another passage leading to the left. Following this some distance, he was still moving on when something crumbled beneath his feet.

He threw himself backward just in time to save himself falling, though where he would have gone to had he not caught his balance he was at first at a loss to determine, the place being in impenetrable darkness.

He then remembered he carried a box of matches in one of his pockets.

This box he produced, and striking a light soon discovered the fearful peril he had just escaped.

He was on the brink of an abyss—a deep, unfathomable pit yawning at his very feet.

Stout of heart as he was, the sight made him fairly shudder.

He stepped back, at the same time glancing round him.

The brief space of time during the burning of the match showed him that on one side of the pit there was a narrow ledge, not large enough to permit more than one person to walk over it at a time.

This ledge, after passing the pit, wound round towards the back part of the cavern, where there was plenty of room for several people.

Brenton thought it would prove an advantageous place of concealment until the Malays should have departed from the island.

He therefore left the cavern and made his way back to the spot where Faith and the cabin boy awaited him.

"I have found a good hiding-place," said he; "one which I think will answer our purpose very well."

He then described the pit and his narrow escape therefrom.

"If the Malays should venture there to look for us I can defend our little castle, as there is only room enough for one of them at a time to get round to us past the pit."

Faith, however, shook her head.

"How can you, armed only with a dagger, hope to make a stand against so many?" said she.

"I can do my best," he answered. "I can at least keep them at bay while you and the boy leave the place, which I have no doubt you could do by passing through another small opening, which I think I saw at the back of the cave, although I will not be certain on that point."

"And do you suppose we could leave you in such a situation?"

"I must and will defend you, if need be at the sacrifice of my own life," he answered.

"I would not leave you," spoke up the cabin boy, with becoming spirit; "I would stay to help you."

"I hope," said Faith, "we may not come to that pass; but if we should, sir, you may depend upon it that I would not leave you while your life was in danger."

"I would insist upon it," answered the young man. "But come, had we not better get to our new retreat as soon as we can?"

He led the way, the two others following.

Faith, when she gained the edge of the pit, and by the lighted match that Brenton held glanced down into its dark depths, shuddered to think of her conductor's narrow escape.

As soon as they were in their places in the cave he examined the opening, at which he had previously given a mere cursory glance.

It led to another passage, which he was resolved to also explore.

Entering it, he moved on some distance until he saw, far ahead of him, a faint gleam of light.

Toward this he hurried, and, soon reaching it, he came upon an opening looking out upon the sea.

This opening being large enough for a human form to squeeze through it, he looked out, to see on his right the beach where it formed a slight curve.

Near this he beheld something large and black, which he was unable to make out clearly in the indistinct light.

Crawling through the aperture, he dropped without hesitation into the sea, which, as he had expected, was not here very deep.

Wading at once to land, he discovered that the black object was a large boat, which had evidently either got adrift from some wreck or had been swept away from some craft during the late heavy gale.

"It is a blessing," thought the young man; "nothing could be more acceptable, especially if we should happen to be hard pushed."

With some difficulty he contrived to haul the boat upon the beach.

At the same moment a little farther beyond, in the faint light of the moon, he saw something yellow gleaming through the shrubbery.

He made toward the spot, to discover that these were bananas—ripe, yellow bananas hanging in great plenty from the vine.

Having plucked a large quantity, and feeling thankful for this discovery, he returned with the fruit and his good news to the cave.

(To be continued.)



MAURICE DURANT.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long. *Shakespeare.*

Here, in the darkness, such a deed was done
As fills the night with awe and dread.
Here, in the night, across the rabbits' run,
The blow was struck that left her dead. *Anon.*

THE morning after the ball the sun shone out brightly, and the sky was as calm and clear as if a cloud had never dimmed it.

Maud and Sir Fielding were seated at the breakfast-table, talking over the events of last night, or rather the early morning, when Sir Fielding's valet knocked, entered, and, advancing with some embarrassment, said:

"Mr. Durant is not in his room, nor has his bed been slept in. I have his letters here, sir."

"Dear me," said Sir Fielding, not very much astonished, for Maurice Durant was wont to be uncertain in his movements, while Maud turned pale and set down the coffee-cup she was filling. "Dear me, have you sent any one over the grounds?"

"Yes, Sir Fielding, for one of these letters is marked 'important,' but no one can find him."

"The Rectory?" said Maud.

"I have been over there, miss, myself," replied the valet, "but Mr. Durant has not slept there, nor has he been there this morning."

Sir Fielding looked puzzled, and as the man laid the letters on the table and left the room he said:

"When did you see him last, my darling?"

"Last night, papa," said Maud, turning pale. "I left him in the gallery, where we had gone to rest for a little while, and I have not seen him since."

"It's very strange," said Sir Fielding, rising and walking to the window, then back to the fire. "I'll go up into his room, I think."

As he walked to the door a footman entered and said that the foreman of the workmen at the Rectory had arrived to see Mr. Durant by appointment.

"Mr. Durant is not here, say, Thomas," said Sir Fielding. "I—I really don't know what to do. Ask him to wait a little," and, forgetting that he had intended going up to Maurice Durant's room, he returned to the fireplace and stood rubbing his hands irresolutely.

Maud sat still and pale, her coffee and the rest of her breakfast untouched.

"Have you found him, papa?" she asked, tremulously.

"No, no, my dear," he said, adding, with a re-

[THE DETECTIVE.]

assuring smile, "He has gone for a book in the library perhaps or a walk; depend upon it he will be here directly. You know nothing is strange that Maurice Durant does."

Maud thought the suggestion of the walk was a correct one, and regained something of her colour, but was still rather troubled.

Sir Fielding, quite reassured, took his chair again and went on with his breakfast.

Presently another knock came to the door and the footman said that the head stableman wished to speak with Sir Fielding.

"Now?" said Sir Fielding, looking puzzled.

The man had never made such a request before.

Could he want to give warning?

"He says he wants to see you immediately, Sir Fielding," said the footman, and, Sir Fielding nodding, the stableman entered.

"I'm sorry to intrude and trouble you, sir," he said, respectfully, and with some excitement, "but there's been a robbery down at the stables."

"A robbery!" exclaimed Sir Fielding. "Nonsense."

"Yes, but there has, sir. The east stable door be broken open and the brown cob be gone."

"What?" exclaimed Sir Fielding, scarcely believing his ears.

"It be, sir," said the man; "and, what be more, Maister Dewrant's dawg, Tigris, have gone as well."

Maud rose, trembling.

Sir Fielding set down his coffee-cup with a sudden crash.

"Brown cob—Tigris—gone! There's some mistake, Norton, surely."

"No, there bea'n't, unfortunately, sir," replied the man, with earnest civility. "There bea'n't no mistake. The cob's gone and the dawg, and, by token, I can trace the cob's footmarks across the lawn and the meadow."

Sir Fielding looked troubled and startled.

"What—what does it all mean? A robbery! I can scarcely believe it. Some one has taken the cob—some of the guests, Norton."

"Tain't likely, Sir Fielding," said the man.

"There was plenty o' carriages. Besides, they wouldn't ha' broke the lock of the stable door to get at 'im. They'd ha' called me or one o' the grooms."

Sir Fielding paced the room.

"I will go and look at it," he said. "Meanwhile, Maud, ring the bell and tell one of the men to ride off to the police-station at Warrington. A robbery! I can scarcely believe my ears," and he left the room followed by the head groom.

Before he had reached the back of the hall Barber,

the keeper, opened the end door and burst in as white as a ghost, without his gun or his cap.

Seeing Sir Fielding he stopped, panting and breathless, and pulled a tuft of his rough, curly hair.

Sir Fielding stared.

"What on earth's the matter, Barber? Have you found the cob?"

"The cob!" exclaimed the gamekeeper, looking from Sir Fielding to the groom in astonishment.

"What cob? I didn't know one was lost! I have come to tell you summat dreadful has happened in the wood, Sir Fielding."

Sir Fielding glanced back quickly at the breakfast-room, and the groom, understanding the look, walked back and shut the door.

"Now," said Sir Fielding, who had grown pale, "what is it, Barber? Speak low—Miss Maud is in that room."

"I won't let her hear, Sir Fielding," said the man.

"Perhaps you'll step outside, sir."

They walked out on to the terrace, and then, Sir Fielding with a gesture of impatience telling him to go on, the man drew a long breath and said:

"It's summat very dreadful, Sir Fielding. They've been and took it to the station at Annsleigh, and the police was coming to the Hall right upon my heels."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Sir Fielding, still paler. "What is dreadful—what have they taken to the station?"

"A woman, Sir Fielding. I found her myself first thing this morning, lying face upwards in the Black Pool, wi' a great ugly stab in her bosom."

Sir Fielding staggered and clung to the terrace.

"A woman—dead! murdered! Good Heaven! Tell me all."

"There ain't much to tell, Sir Fielding," said the man. "I was going to the preserves early this morning to see what damage the storm had done the young trees, and, passing the Black Pool, noticed something white lying in the middle of it. When I got near it gave me a regular shock to see as how it was a woman's head just a-floating like a cork, all white and set like. I started off running, crying for help, and run against the inspector of the police, as was in the lane. He went back with me, and atween us we managed to get her out. She was quite dead—been dead for hours, the inspector said—and had a great slit in her bosom—here," and Barber struck his chest. "The inspector he went for some men and they carried it on a stretcher to Annsleigh. I went wi' 'em, and as soon as I heard that they were going to send some men to the Hall I tore away to give you warning, for fear Miss Maud—"

"I see, I see," said Sir Fielding, faintly, pressing

his hand to his forehead and feeling cold with dread.

Maurice Durant missing, the cob and dog gone, the corpse of a murdered woman found floating in the Black Pool! Great Heaven! what did it all mean? Was there any connection—

Shudderingly he put the fearful thought away, and, telling Barber to watch and tell him when the police arrived, he returned to the breakfast-room, and, trying to look unconcerned, said:

"The cob's gone, I'm afraid, Maud. It's a great pity to lose one of the best horses in the stables."

"And the dog, papa," she said, anxiously, going up to him and placing her trembling hand upon his arm.

"The dog—oh? Oh, yes, running about the grounds somewhere, most likely, chasing the rabbits. My dear, I wish you would go up to your aunt's room a little while. I have some business to do with one or two men."

His voice faltered and she looked up at him with a terrified, questioning look; but he managed to smile, and still with the anxious expression upon her lovely face she, ever obedient, glided from the room and up the stairs.

Scarcely had she gone than Barber knocked at the door, and Sir Fielding, opening it, walked into the hall and met the inspector and two policemen.

"Good-morning, Sir Fielding," said the inspector, respectfully. "I suppose you have heard of this terrible affair?"

Sir Fielding nodded.

"I have just heard," he said.

"You being the nearest magistrate, Sir Fielding, we have come up immediately for a warrant for the inquest."

Sir Fielding started.

"Ah, yes; I had forgotten," he said, with a sigh of relief. "Follow me into the library, will you?"

They followed him into the library, and, sitting down, Sir Fielding wrote out the warrant.

"There it is," he said. "Now have you time to tell me all you know of this affair?"

The inspector very willingly repeated all that Barber had said, and wound up with:

"She must have been dead directly the stab was given. It was a mighty deep cut—pierced her lungs like, I suppose."

Sir Fielding hid his eyes and shuddered.

"Have you a clue to her identity, or to the—the murderer?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Not as yet, Sir Fielding," said the man. "We have telegraphed for Mr. Crawshaw, the detective, and expect him by the next train. He'll find it out quick enough, I'll warrant. He's the cleverest detective going, Sir Fielding."

"And the identity?"

"Not a trace. She's an Italian by her look, and a great drinker; Doctor Martin says. He saw her as she was lying at the station, directly we'd brought her in."

"Any money found on her?" asked Sir Fielding.

"Not a penny, for a good reason," said the inspector, significantly.

"Why?" asked Sir Fielding.

"Pockets turned inside out," replied the inspector, meaningly.

"Ah!" said Sir Fielding, and breathed a sigh of relief, though from what he could scarcely tell.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Thus heavenly hope is all serene,

But earthly hope, how bright so'er,

Still fluctuates o'er this changing scene,

As false and fleeting as 'tis fair.

Heber.

WHEN the men had gone Sir Fielding called the gamekeeper into the library.

"Take the mare," he said, "and ride into Warrington. You know Mr. Durant? Well, describe him at the inn on the road, and at the hotel, and ask if they have seen him. If they have, learn which way he has gone, and follow him hard and fast. The mare is a match for the cob at any time, an easy match with the cob half-worn out," he murmured.

Then, after a pause, added, aloud:

"If you cannot hear of him on the road, ride on to the station and inquire if he went up by last night's express or the early train this morning. There are usually very few passengers, and the station-master cannot fail to have noticed him. If he has, return to me as fast as the mare can bring you."

Barber touched his hair respectfully, and Sir Fielding saw him from the corridor bound down the terrace towards the stable like a slough-hound.

Scarcely had he gone than Lady Mildred entered the room.

"What is the matter, Fielding?" she said, with some astonishment. "Maud tells me some disjointed tale about Maurice Durant not having slept here last night, and having fled no one knows whither, and I

saw from one of the upper windows the inspector and two of his men walking down the road. What—ever is it?"

"Nothing—nothing, my dear Mildred," said Sir Fielding, hurriedly. "At least, nothing that concerns you or Maud. There has been an accident in the wood, but it has nothing to do with Maurice Durant or his absence."

"But is he really absent?" asked Lady Mildred, divining from Sir Fielding's pale face that something more had happened than he would have her think, and, womanlike, pressing the question.

"Missing! No," said Sir Fielding, querulously. "Would you call me missing if I had walked into the village?"

"Oh, if he has only gone into the village I will go and comfort Maudie," said Lady Mildred. "She is terribly alarmed. It was as much as I could do to keep her from following me down."

"Yes, yes. Go to her, my dear Mildred, and tell her that I wish her to stay in her own or your room for a little while. People are coming to see me about the accident, and I do not wish it to reach her ears—you understand, Mildred."

"Quite, Fielding," replied her ladyship, and went upstairs again.

Sir Fielding commenced pacing the room with troubled footsteps, vainly striving to cast from him the feeling of dread which settled upon his spirits like a dark cloud.

He knew that Barber must be some hours ere he could return, even supposing that he met with tidings of Maurice Durant, or Maurice Durant himself. Yet he was already burnt up with impatience, and dared not leave the library for fear that Maud might see his pale, anxious face, and wring the story of the discovery from him.

He tried to read, but found that the words of his favourite classic ran together in meaningless lines, and in despair he took to walking up and down again.

Two hours passed, then there came a knock at the library door, and Thomas entered.

"A gentleman is waiting in the hall to see you, sir," he announced.

"A gentleman?" said Sir Fielding. "Does he give his name?"

"No, sir, he will not. Says you don't know him, but begs you will see him on a matter of importance."

"Show him in," said Sir Fielding, the troubled look growing more marked upon his face, and Thomas ushered in a stout, comfortable-looking man, of half-gentlemanly, half-tradesman appearance. He was dressed in a dark suit of Oxford tweed, wore particularly well-got-up linen, and had a nicely tied satin scarf round his neck. His face was not particularly good looking or decidedly plain, but there was a something about it that lent it a peculiar, birdlike expression that puzzled one. After two or three minutes' conversation one discovered that the something was a pair of dark, steely eyes, sharp as a needle, and glittering like an eagle's.

When he entered the sharp eyes flashed round the room and took in every corner and peculiarity of it at a glance.

Sir Fielding pointed to a seat.

"You asked to see me, I think?"

"Sir Fielding Chichester?" said the man, cautiously, replying to Sir Fielding's question by another.

"I am Sir Fielding Chichester," he said.

"Thank you, sir. Thought so, but it's always best to make sure. Yes, I did ask to see you. I have just come from Aunsleigh Police Station—I may say from London. My name is Crawshaw, Detective Police, Scotland Yard."

Sir Fielding started.

"Already?"

Mr. Crawshaw smiled.

"Telegraph took quarter of an hour in transmission. Reached me in time to catch the down train. Started at once. Always ready to start at a minute's notice, and was at Aunsleigh and in full possession of what particulars could be got half an hour ago."

All this with a quiet air of power and self-possession tinged with respect.

Sir Fielding was astounded.

"It is marvellous," he said, "how any one escapes pursuit with such a system against them."

Mr. Crawshaw shook his head.

"It is, sir, it is. But they are too many for us sometimes. And now, sir, we'll get this affair over as soon as possible. I'm taking up your time."

He might more justly have said that he was losing his; but Sir Fielding understood him, and said:

"In what way do you want my assistance? I presume you do want it by—"

"Coming here," finished the detective. "Just so. Well it's just this, Sir Fielding. We from Scotland Yard, when we are on the scent, often find clues from the most unlikely things, so we've always got our eyes and ears open to whatever turns up. Now while Brandon, the inspector, an excellent man, Sir

Fielding, was putting me in possession of the facts of this affair, and we were looking at the body, one of his men, a talkative, gossiping sort of a fellow that'll never make a good officer, began chattering about the ball here last night. The inspector would have stopped him, but at a sign from me let him alone. Well this man, it seems, had been gossiping with one of your servants, the man who let me in if I'm not mistaken, his name's Thomas."

Sir Fielding nodded, and sank into a chair with a feeling of uneasiness. What was this legal bloodhound aiming at?

"I thought so," continued Mr. Crawshaw, "from the description. He had been gossiping with him while on duty this morning, and heard that one of your guests, who had been staying at the house for some months past, had disappeared suddenly last night."

Sir Fielding rose from his chair, and was about to speak, but remained silent and sat down again.

The detective took keen note of every motion and expression, then continued:

"Now, Sir Fielding, I needn't ask you to excuse a man for doing his duty. Duty's duty, however painful, and to investigate this murder's my duty, and, I may add, a painful one, for I can pretty clearly see—However, to go on. This man with a little pressing also informed me that your footman had told him that a woman, answering to the description of the deceased, came up to the Hall here last night and asked for the missing guest, Mr. Maurice Durant."

Sir Fielding rose as white as ashes.

"No, no!" he exclaimed, faintly. "It cannot be—there is some mistake. The man was speaking falsely!"

The detective raised his eyebrows.

"A very reasonable remark, Sir Fielding, and a very knowing one, if you'll allow me to use the word. It's a safe line to believe every man false till you've proved him true. Now we can test my man's assertion in five minutes, if you will have the extreme kindness to touch the bell and send for your footman Thomas."

Sir Fielding, too stunned to move, pointed to the bell, and the detective, with the stealthiness that characterized all his movements, rose and rang it.

Thomas appeared to answer it.

"Better shut the door, sir, eh?" hinted the detective.

Sir Fielding nodded, and Mr. Crawshaw rose, as stealthily as before, and closed it.

"Now shall I ask a few questions or will you, Sir Fielding?" he said, respectfully.

Sir Fielding by a gesture intimated that he might do so, and supporting his head on his hand gazed anxiously at the two men.

"Your name is Thomas—"

"Gibbes, sir," said the footman, suddenly growing uneasy and frightened.

Mr. Crawshaw, seeing this with a glance of his steel eyes, modulated his voice to a soothing softness.

"Been in Sir Fielding's service long?"

"Nearly seven years, sir," replied the man, looking at Sir Fielding appealingly.

"Seven years. And expect a good character, eh?" asked Mr. Crawshaw.

The footman hoped his honour would say a kind word for him, if so be he came to leave. Had always done his best, etc.

"Very good," said Mr. Crawshaw, then with a sudden sharpness: "You opened the door to the person—the female who came last night, or rather this morning, and inquired for Mr. Maurice Durant?"

"I did," said the footman, looking startled.

"You did. Well, just tell Sir Fielding and me what occurred, will you? Take your time, and have the goodness to stick to the simple facts."

The man paled and flushed by turns at the keen, hard tone and still keener gaze of his questioner, and commenced:

"It was nigh upon one o'clock this morning when going into the hall for some ice I heard a knocking at the door. At first I thought it was the wind, and thinking the company would have a wet journey home I was about to return upstairs when the knocking sounded louder. I put down the ice pail and opened the door, and saw a woman standing against it, shrinking, as it were, from the rain. She was rather tall and very shabby dressed, and drenched to the skin, and—and—"

"Speak out," said Mr. Crawshaw, decisively. "Sir Fielding is anxious to hear it all."

"Well, I thought by the look of her that she was half drunk, and was a-going to tell her to go round to the basement door, thinking as she was bogging and had mistaken the entrance, when she asked for Mr. Maurice Durant—"

Sir Fielding started to his feet, but at a gesture from the detective sat down again and hid his face in his trembling hands.

"Go on," said Mr. Crawshaw, soothingly.
 "Well, as she didn't speak very distinct like—"
 "What do you mean?—how?" broke in the detective, sharply.

"Well, foreign-like, and also like one that had a little drop to drink."

The detective nodded.

"I thought I'd misunderstood her, and I asked her, rather sharp like, what she said. 'I want to see Mr. Durant,' she says, and wondering whether I was doing right I asked her to stop in. She came in, shivering and shaking, and seemed dazzled like at the lights and stupid, and when I looked over the banisters, going up to tell Mr. Durant, I see that instead of sitting down on the hall chair she'd crept into a corner."

"Go on," said the detective, with a curious downward look in his keen eyes.

"I was high upon five minutes finding Mr. Durant, but I come upon him in the gallery and I told him that a woman—no, I remember I didn't say a woman, I said a person—"

"Ah!" said the detective between his teeth.

"A person wanted to see him.' He looked astonished like and shrugged his shoulders, as he does when he's surprised. 'If?' he says. 'I told him she'd asked for him and then he asked me 'If I was sure?' and when I said I was he ran down the stairs lightly, humming one of the tunes he played on the organ."

"Go on," said the detective.

"Well, sir, I went on to the drawing-room to serve the coffee, and— I haven't seen Mr. Durant since."

Sir Fielding looked up, and his trembling lips seemed formed to speak; but the detective said hastily, as if to prevent him:

"Do you think you should know the female who called and asked for Mr. Durant last night?"

"I am sure I should," said the man, confidently.

"Why?" asked the detective, sharply. "You say you only saw her for five minutes, if so long. The night was dark as pitch. How do you feel so certain, eh?"

"Because I had a good look at her face. It wasn't like the faces you see about here, but foreign and dark-like, with black, bloodshot eyes. Besides, the hall lamps were shining full upon it all the time she was standing there."

"Good," said the detective. "Now do you think you can keep a still tongue in your head about this affair, eh? Not spread it all over the servants' hall, hem?"

The man looked over to Sir Fielding appealingly, and Mr. Crawshaw, at a gesture from Sir Fielding, abruptly nodded, to signify that he had finished, and Thomas Gibbs withdrew.

Immediately he had gone the detective arose, and, in cold yet still respectful tones, said:

"Sir Fielding, duty is duty. I must see Mr. Maurice Durant's room."

Sir Fielding started.

"Surely," he breathed, "you don't suspect—"
 "I never do suspect anything or anybody. I don't presume to do it, Sir Fielding, but I know when I've got a clue, or think I have."

Sir Fielding walked to the door and then back again to the calm, immovable bloodhound.

"Is it imperatively necessary that you should see the room?"

The man nodded.

"It's my duty, Sir Fielding, my duty."

"Stay one moment," said Sir Fielding, faintly, and he walked to a cabinet, took out a decanter and some glasses, filled two of the latter, and, pointing to one, drank the contents of the other.

The detective stealthily took up the glass, muttered the usual good wishes, and, tossing the spirit down noiselessly, set the glass upon the table again.

"Now," said Sir Fielding, "I—I am ready. I will go with you," and he ascended the stairs, followed closely by the detective.

When he reached the corridor leading, as Sir Fielding informed him, to the suite of apartments occupied by Maurice Durant the detective at every step scrutinized the rich carpet and every foot of the wall.

Stopping before the door of the dressing-room, Sir Fielding was about to open it, but the detective, with a muttered apology, seized his hand, and, kneeling down, carefully examined the handle.

Sir Fielding, feeling sick and faint, said not a word, and, apparently satisfied with his examination, the detective opened the door himself and entered.

Here his movements were as strange as they were outside.

First he dropped upon his knees and passed his hand over the carpet by the door, carefully examining his hand at each foot. Then he looked at the tablecloth, and next, his sharp eyes resting upon the bureau, he carefully opened the drawers.

In the first one the open empty inland cash-box at-

tracted attention, and he took it out and laid it on the table.

In the next the revolver caused him to tighten his lips, and he whispered: "Loaded!" with a significant twinkle of his gray eyes.

Then he examined the stock minutely, and laid it by the cash-box.

"Now for the next room," he said, musingly, and, kneeling down as before, examined the handle.

Sir Fielding, cold as ice, stood watching him.

Rising from his knees, the detective cautiously opened the door, but this time did not stop to examine the carpet, for the heap of dress clothes lying on the floor had caught his eyes, and he sprang silently towards it.

They were still wet, hanging heavy and limp in his light grasp.

With a gleam in his keen eyes, he carried them to the window, and commenced going over them with a small magnifying glass.

Coat, waistcoat, trousers. Then, placing them on the bed, he stooped and took the shirt, and as he did so turned to Sir Fielding, and pointed to three distinct drops of blood upon the soiled, damp frills!

Sir Fielding started with horror, and fell against the door-post.

The detective stole to the window, and opened it for a little air; then, taking a small taper from his pocket, lighted it, and by its means melted some sealing-wax, with which he sealed each door and window, putting three large seals upon the outer one.

Then he nodded towards the stairs, and Sir Fielding, wondering whether he was asleep and dreaming some hideous dream, walked down with the bloodhound behind him.

The library gained the old man sank into a chair and bowed his head upon his hands.

The detective's voice aroused him. It was cold and sharp:

"Sir Fielding, I must ask you for a warrant for the apprehension of Maurice Durant on suspicion of murder!"

Sir Fielding sprang to his feet.

"No, no!" he gasped. "Evidence insufficient—I—I—"

"Many a man has been hung on half as much, Sir Fielding," replied the detective, coolly. "The footman's story, the wet clothes, and, Sir Fielding, it is mistaken kindness to conceal the fact from you, there was blood upon every door handle, the stock of the pistol and the cash-box, a drop or two wherever he had laid his hands!"

Sir Fielding uttered a groan, which, before it had died away, was echoed in a voice that sent the life blood from his heart, and Maud, white as the corpse lying in the station-house, glided from behind the curtains.

The detective uttered an exclamation. Sir Fielding started forward.

But Maud, with her cold, icy hand, pushed him back.

Molten her dry, livid lips, she said, in a voice that seemed like one from the grave:

"Papa, issue the warrant. I will pledge my life that Maurice Durant is no murderer."

Sir Fielding caught at her arm, but she shook him off and stood staring at the detective.

"Issue the warrant. I, who love him better than my immortal soul, command you!"

Sir Fielding, trembling like a leaf, sat down at the desk, and acting under the influence of the outstretched hand, wrote out in shaking characters the warrant for the apprehension on the charge of murder of the man who had saved him from ruin and won his daughter's heart.

As the detective took it from his trembling hand and put it in his pocket the heroic girl staggered and fell into her father's arms.

The next morning the chase had commenced, the bloodhounds were on the scent.

But it was soon lost, and they hesitated and got astray.

Large rewards were offered, descriptions of the supposed murderer's person were posted all over the kingdom, every town and village searched, London scoured, but to no purpose. The fugitive had got clear away, and the hounds were at fault.

That he was the murderer only a few had even doubts. There had been some story of a strange foreign-looking man inquiring his way to Grassmere, at the same wayside inn at which the woman had stopped, but no one attached any importance to that. What did that solitary fact weigh against the wet clothes, the blood-stains, the actually proved meeting of Maurice Durant and the deceased?

The pockets being turned inside out was no evidence in his favour the police decided. It was a common ruse when the deed of blood was actuated by feelings of revenge or passion to empty the pockets,

in the hope of misleading the detectives and throwing them off the scent.

Another link in the mysterious chain of circumstances had also been found. Mr. Crawshaw, in a search he had instituted in every part of the Hall, had come upon a small picture which was proved to bear a striking likeness to the face of the murdered woman, and Sir Fielding, on being asked about it, distinctly remembered that Maurice Durant had nearly swooned at sight of it the first night he had visited the gallery.

No, public opinion declared him the murderer, and once public opinion makes its declaration it is difficult to change it.

Even Sir Fielding and Lady Mildred had their doubts, though they strove hard against them; but Maud—gentle, loving Maud—declared, delirious or conscious, as she lay on her sick-bed, his innocence night and day, and called Heaven to witness it.

For the first week after the terrible scene in the library they had despaired of her life, and Sir Fielding had telegraphed for Chudleigh and Carlotta; but she had fought hard against her agony and delirium, and the doctors declared that though she would not be out of danger for some time Chudleigh's return might save her.

They said this to Sir Fielding, but to themselves they spoke of no hope and entertained none.

(To be continued.)

THE FORTUNES OF BRAMBLETHORPE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE dinner was elegant and appetizing which had been set before the distinguished guests of the hotel.

Their active day had made them all hungry except Estelle.

She too pretended to be enjoying the viands, while she felt as if every mouthful which she compelled herself to swallow would choke her.

Lord Harry watched her with a growing uneasiness.

At first from the height of his own regained happiness he pitied her, feeling sorry that because he was so happy she must be so miserable.

He guessed at the hopes which she had entertained, and the disappointment they must have met, for Estelle as well as his sisters, knew of his former relations with Agnes MacLeod.

Nothing could be more kind, more gentle and affectionate than his demeanour towards the girl who loved him and knew that he loved another.

He pressed the delicacies of the table upon her attention; he directed his conversation almost exclusively to her.

He showed her, in those small ways which are indescribable, that he was anxious not to wound her feelings.

In return she gave him the most sweet and courteous replies; but her voice, albeit so low, had a steel-like ring in it, and her eyes, when she looked at him, had a strange glitter.

The lids were drawn in two straight lines, the pupils were contracted, and although they shone like fire there was not the faintest glimmer of a smile in their brightness.

After a time these strange looks of hers began to affect Lord Harry most unpleasantly.

Everything disagreeable in the past rushed over him.

He recalled Estelle's threats, and that his father was not indifferent to the consequences of the loss of his stolen papers.

He grew cold and nervous.

In vain he endeavoured to recall his joyous mood by dwelling in thought upon the interview which had been promised him on the morrow.

He could not think of Agnes in peace with these other eyes upon him.

He was like one magnetized, yielding his will into the keeping of his tormentor.

His sisters saw nothing of this; they thought Estelle somewhat constrained, but attributed it to the fact of this being her first visit to London since they had quitted it in such affliction.

After the remains of the dinner were taken away they looked over their list, crossing out such errands as had been accomplished, and arranging their tour for the next day so as best to economize time.

"Shall we have your company through the morning?" asked Lady Augusta of her brother.

"It will be impossible for me to go with you. I have made an engagement."

"Oh, I know," cried Clara, archly; "and I suppose you hope that it may lead to a more permanent one."

Augusta smiled.

Lord Harry glanced toward Estelle, seeing a

quiver run over her lips, but she made no remark. He looked at his watch.

"It is time I was off. I regret, dears, for I know you will be lonely here in these empty rooms; but I must see Lord Dundale on business, and I appointed to meet him at the club at eight o'clock. I shall be gone but an hour or two."

"We shall be in bed before the end of two hours. I'm so tired," murmured Clara who was nestled in a corner of the sofa, her dark eyes already soft with sleepiness. "And we have nothing new to talk about, consequently we shall improve our time by going to bed at the hour at which good children go. Therefore take your time. You will see us no more to-night."

"Well, good-night, then. I hope the beds are comfortable. Good-night, Estelle. Sweet dreams." She waited until he had closed the door behind him, then, with a sudden fierce resolution, she sprang to it, opened it, and passed through, closing it behind her so that those within would not hear what she said.

"Lord Harry."

"Did any one call me?" he asked, coming back from the top stair.

"Yes. I shall not be asleep when you return. Will you step in the parlour for a few moments then? I have something to say to you."

"Certainly, if you ask it, Cousin Estelle. But I may be out quite late. Will not the morning answer?"

"It will not. I do not wish your sisters to hear what I have to say. Stay as late as you please, I shall be awake and waiting."

"Then I shall make it a point to return early."

"Not too early—wait until assured your sisters are sleeping."

"Very well, Estelle."

She returned into the parlour, remarking that she had forgotten a commission which she desired Lord Harry to execute.

Then the three girls chatted awhile, principally about their shopping, and finally their light small talk fell upon Miss MacLeod—the two sisters discussing her thoroughly.

"She certainly is very beautiful," remarked Lady Augusta; "but she has no rank, and she is as poor as a church mouse."

"She must be. Her bonnet actually looked as if it were three months old. I should have thought Harry would notice that."

"My pet, men never notice such things. I dare say he saw that it was blue, and becoming to her fair complexion—but, as to the fashion of it, that would make no difference to him."

"I wonder if she loves him," mused Miss Blackeyes.

"I hope so, dear. Because I'm firmly convinced that he is dead in love with her. So we must overlook her poverty; Harry has enough for both, I'm sure—and her family is one of the oldest and most respectable in Scotland. We shall never be ashamed of her; she will be one of the handsomest ladies, if not the handsomest at court. I have made up my mind that she will wear the title our mother wore with as much grace as purity. There's nothing fast about her!"

"Oh, no, indeed! Her manners are lovely. I think I could be good to her, Augusta darling. If Harry should marry some ladies I know, oh, how ugly I should be to them!"

"Hush, my pet!"

"I tell you I would—that Lady Lara Goldaline, for instance."

"Don't get excited. There's no danger," laughed Lady Augusta.

"I know it. Estelle, you have not said a word. How do you like Miss MacLeod? Is she not beautiful?"

"Her style is not that which I admire. Still she is handsome in her way. But—I am so sleepy," and Estelle yawned. "I thought we were to retire early."

"So we were. I am both tired and sleepy. Let us go, Augusta. I wonder, does Miss MacLeod paint her eyebrows? they are just a shade darker than her hair, and such a perfect shape!"

"I don't think she does," replied Augusta, beginning to take down her hair—for they had brought no attendant with them. "Her eyelashes are just as dark, and she could hardly paint them."

"If her title and fortune were equal to his," pursued the little aristocrat, "it would be a satisfactory match."

"I admit that I would like it better if they were," answered Lady Augusta, candidly. "Still I am about to marry a man who has no title."

"But his wealth is enormous. Why cannot we have all the desirable things in each person? Our family, at least, is all that can be asked for. We have an ancient and noble name," said Lady Clara, proudly, her eyes sparkling, "plenty of wealth to sustain our position—and some good looks, I believe," she added, laughingly.

"Yes," rejoined Lady Augusta, "I own that I

am proud of our ancient rank and our spotless name. Shame has never breathed its withering breath over us—not for centuries. Why, Estelle!"

"What is it?" asked Estelle, trying to laugh.

"I do not know. You were looking at me with such a strange expression. I never saw you look so before!"

"I am not aware of looking anything but sleepy and common-place."

"Not now, you are yourself again; but you certainly must have had some curious thought in your brain."

"It was not pretty of us—boasting of our rank before her," whispered Clara; "we forget, she seems so like one of us."

"That may have been it," was answered in the same tone, and then Lady Augusta, shaking down her long golden hair, which rippled about her in sunny ripples, turned gaily to the rector's daughter. "We must find you a count or earl, Cousin Estelle."

"Thank you," was the response, with a malicious smile, "but I have a very good prospect of finding one for myself."

"Indeed! Who? How delightful!"

"We forget that poor papa has been dead but three months," whispered Lady Clara, changing colour. "We must not jest with Cousin Estelle."

Estelle turned abruptly and went into her own bed-chamber, saying "Good-night" with her back to them.

"We have hurt her feelings," said Lady Augusta, and, somewhat silently, the two sisters undressed and crept into the same bed.

Both bedrooms opened out of the parlour. Lord Harry's room did not connect with this suite. The gas in the parlour was turned low, but not extinguished; the sleeping-room doors were left open, for ventilation, into the larger apartment. The sisters were soon fast asleep.

Estelle, who had not undressed, crept out and listened to their light breathing, and also for the footstep which she now began to expect. That step had no sooner reached the door than she had softly unlocked it, and Lord Harry came in, looking rather unwilling.

"They are asleep," she murmured; "let us speak low, so as not to disturb them. Sit here, in this corner, will you?"

"Well, Estelle?"

"You are impatient, as you were once before," she began, answering his inquiring eyes with a firm gaze. "What I told you then I now repeat with double emphasis. You are going to see Miss MacLeod in the morning; you will ask her to be your wife. I cannot bear it."

"Estelle, are you still so—so—"

"Mad, and shameless, and foolish? Yes, I am. By going to Mrs. MacLeod's you make me your bitter enemy."

"But I must go; I have told them that I would come."

"Send an excuse. I warn you."

"I shall certainly go, Estelle. Nothing on earth could keep me from Agnes now. When I believed that she was a married woman it was different."

"I understand. You say 'nothing on earth?'"

"Nothing!"

"Not disgrace?"

"Nothing but death!"

"Not utter ruin of your good name, and loss of your estates?"

"Estelle, such propositions are absurd. Who can ruin me, or deprive me of what is mine?"

"I can!"

"It is incredible."

"A few days shall suffice to prove it to you. Lord Harry, you must give up Agnes MacLeod. When the proper time comes you must make me your wife—for your own sake, for the sake of your sisters. I shall ruin you all. Make it my interest to hide the secret, and it remains hidden. Anger me, provoke my revenge, and I give it to the winds."

"There is a secret, I know, for my father confessed it; but it cannot be so serious as you would make me believe. And if it were, Estelle, I tell you no woman but Agnes MacLeod shall ever be my wife. She may refuse me, she may not want a ruined man, such as you threaten to make me—very well; then I shall remain single to the end of my days. It would be wicked for you and me to marry, Estelle, when I feel as I do. I do not comprehend how you can desire it."

She laughed.

"Why do you laugh? Are you in earnest? Is this but a specimen of your acting, Estelle?"

"I laughed to think you could not understand the situation. I, who am poor, who have no weapons but my own wit with which to fight my way in the world—I, who am as proud and ambitious as I am poor—am asked not to use the advantage which chance has thrown in my way—to give up a lofty position and the man I love meekly to another woman and retire to the shades of my father's rectory? Why not advise me to marry his curate, and have done with it?"

"But if I do not love you, Estelle?"

"I shall be a countess—I shall have a position. Beside that, at least I should prevent you marrying another woman."

"And your jealousy is so fierce as that?"

"It is. I will not give you up."

"As if you could compel me, Estelle! I do not really think you can be in earnest. If you are tell me what is this terrible secret of which you seek to make so much?"

"It is simply this," she cried, in a shrill whisper, leaning toward him and laying her hand on his as if afraid he would break away from her, while her eyes burned upon his own—"You are an illegitimate child! Your sisters are illegitimate! Your uncle is the true heir to the title and the entailed estates. You have nothing—nothing—not even your name!"

He arose to his feet, smiling down upon her with a pale scorn.

"It is a falsehood, as foolish as it is baseless. All the world knew that my father and mother were legally married, and that we three are their children, born in holy wedlock. The earth never contained a purer angel than my mother, Estelle. I must think your reason is affected. Nothing else can account for your very singular proceedings. What put such an insane crochot in your little head, Estelle?"

He really did feel concerned for her sanity, and this fear softened the anger with which he had at first spoken.

"It was the written proofs which put it there," she answered, coldly smiling. "Will you sit down, Lord Harry?"

He resumed his seat, more with the idea of humouring her strange whim than because he believed she had any revelation to make to him.

"Perhaps the fact never made much impression on your mind, yet when I speak of it you must recall it. Your father, the Earl of Bramblethorpe, was your mother's second husband."

"Yes, yes," said her listener, a little startled; "my dear mother, although so young, was a widow when my father married her."

"Was supposed to be a widow."

"Was one," continued the young lord, more excitedly; "the count was shipwrecked and perished at sea."

"Was supposed to have perished," corrected the quiet voice again.

"Estelle, for Heaven's sake what are you talking about?"

"About your mother and her two husbands. Unfortunately, when the Countess Steffazzi married the Earl of Bramblethorpe, the count, her first husband, was still alive. He may be living yet for all I know. Consequently the second marriage was not a legal one, nor did your father, after becoming acquainted with the truth, see fit to have it legalized, as he might have done without much difficulty. I conjecture that it was his stubborn pride which induced him to keep the matter a secret, hoping that it would always remain a secret, and no one be injured by it. I can see that he apprehended opposition from his brother, the captain, who would inherit, after his death if the children could be prevented from coming in as legal heirs. He must have known that it would have caused a dreadful scandal, and have feared that the shock of it would kill his wife, whose health was very delicate at the time he was made aware of Count Steffazzi's existence. I think that he never told the countess the truth. She died a year or two later, and then, less than ever, could he think of casting a shadow on the memory of one so pure and good. At least thus I understand it. He preferred the chances of a discovery to the certainty. I have the knowledge and the proof that he paid immense sums of hush-money to this same Italian count, who loved money better than his beautiful wife. I have the proofs of all I have stated to you and I shall use them."

Lord Harry had sat staring at her and listening like a person in a dream.

He now buried his face in his hands, groaning faintly:

"My poor mother! My poor father! Ah, father, what a terrible load you carried about with you when I thought you one of the most prosperous of men. That was what killed him. Yes, he died of heart disease, and that disease was brought on by grief and anxiety."

"It is credible," said the girl, quietly.

"It is for you—to you ruin us! You who have sat at our table, with whom my sisters have shared everything—you would ruin these companions of your childhood, blight their prospects, drag them down, break their hearts!"

"It is not I who decide. I give the choice to you."

"Serpent! you show me your dark, wicked spirit, and then ask me to love and live with you. Never! Better disgrace and death, so that I remain an honourable man, true to myself, true to the woman I love!"

"Very well. Only do not speak so loud. I heard

their ladyships stir in their dreams. Poor things! Only this evening they were flaunting their pride of birth in their humble cousin's face. I laughed then when I thought of the truth."

"Estelle, are you a fard?"

"You have made me one. Yes, I believe I feel rather fiendish. There is 'no fury like a woman scorned,' you remember."

"It is true, too. I am made to feel it. Estelle, I care little for myself—that is, I can bear it like a man—but those sweet, dear, happy girls, for them I will deign to plead. Will you not spare them who have been so loving to you?"

"So 'patronizing' you should say, my lord, by sufferance. They spared me the crumbs from their table. But, Harry, you seem to forget. The choice lies with you. You have but to resign that woman and make me Countess of Bramblethorpe, and it will be as much my interest as yours to destroy all proofs of what I have told you. I have it in my power to prevent the secret from becoming known to any but ourselves. Harry, when I am your wife I will be good and gentle."

"I cannot undertake to make you that, Estelle," he said, bitterly.

"Then you do not believe that I will use the power I possess. I swear I will spare neither you nor yours!"

"Estelle!"

"I swear it—neither saintly Augusta nor dainty Clara. Beware, Lord Harry, of thinking only of yourself! If you alone were to suffer it might be proper for you to decide according to your own taste. Think of your sisters. It will be even more terrible for them than for you. But you cannot give me a final answer to-night. It is too sudden. I will not take your answer now. At breakfast you can give me to understand whether you are going to see Agnes MacLeod or not. If you make that visit then our warfare at once becomes open. Good-night."

She arose, went into her bedroom and closed the door, leaving him sitting motionless, staring at the spot where she had disappeared. After a time he moved, becoming somewhat more conscious of his own feelings and condition.

His ears rang as if he had received a blow on the head; his brain was on fire, his heart throbbled so that he heard it.

A revelation more totally unexpected had never come to a human being. In one moment he was stricken from the height of happiness and prosperity to the depth of shame and misery—hurled down without any fault of his own, or of any one, by a dreadful, hideous mistake of others. It was as if an earthquake had opened under him.

"Thank Heaven, my mother was spared this!" he murmured.

Hour after hour passed by and still he remained in his seat, his head dropped on his bosom, thinking—or not so much thinking as just simply feeling.

Lord Harry was aroused from his night-long reverie by a ray of morning sun-light which came through the shutters and struck his aching eyes. He arose with a shiver, for the night had been cool, and the fire in the grate had expired hours ago.

It was too late to think of seeking his own room; he wrapped a shawl of Lady Augusta's about his shoulders, and lay down on the sofa, where he fell into a troubled slumber, from which he was aroused by a cry from Clara, who had been surprised on finding him there on coming dressed from her bedroom.

"My darling, darling brother! what is the matter with you? You do not know how strangely you look! Augusta, come here! I am afraid Harry is ill."

"It is nothing but a nervous headache," he explained as the two girls got hold of his hands, scanning him with almost unreasonable anxiety, for their father's sudden death had made them apprehensive at every slightest illness.

"And you have not been in bed at all?"

"No. I stayed here to be nearer you. I will go to my room now and bathe my head in cold water. We will have breakfast immediately. After a cup of tea I shall feel better."

"He looks frightful—as if he had been ill a month," said Clara when Estelle joined them in the parlour.

"Nervous headache always makes one look bad," she replied, without seeming at all alarmed, and her composure was reassuring to her companions.

Servants had relit the fire and brought in the breakfast.

Lord Harry joined the ladies at table. He was pale, and looked five years older than yesterday, but he said that his head was much better. He drank several cups of strong tea, but scarcely tasted the food.

Estelle ate with her usual appetite. She felt an exulting sense of her own power. Although she loved this man—as such natures love—she could bear to see him suffer. He suffered because he did

not love her. Very well. Let him suffer it out! Presently he would be at her feet.

Yes, it was certain in his mind that he would relinquish Agnes and come to her. He could not be so mad as to face the consequences she had prepared for him.

She was all the more certain of this when he said to his sisters:

"I will accompany you this morning, if you like. I am not going to Mrs. MacLeod's, and so shall have the time to spend with you. I should like you to be as expeditious as possible, so that we may return home by the evening train."

"I am quite certain we shall get through," answered Lady Augusta.

Then her eyes encountered Clara's, each mutely asking the other:

"What does this mean? Did he go there last evening? Have they quarrelled? Is this what is the matter with his head?"

Estelle hid the flash which leaped to her eyes by looking steadily down at her plate.

"So far so good," thought she.

"I will go to my room to write a note or two," said Lord Harry, as he left the table. "It will take me but a few minutes. You can be getting on your bonnets."

"He is writing to her," thought Estelle. "I wish I could see what he writes," and her sense of success became less vivid.

(To be continued.)

LADY CHETWYND'S SPECTRE.

CHAPTER VII.

THE minutes passed and Lord Chetwynd did not appear in response to the summons of his young wife. A party of friends had arrived at the Park, and he was so engaged with them that the butler, to whom the chattering Fifiue had transmitted her message, dared not interrupt him.

The youthful marchioness paced her floor impetuously, glancing continuously and impatiently at the little Sevres clock on the low mantel.

Her soul seemed on fire. A strange consuming jealousy possessed her.

The thought that her husband, whose love was her life, had loved Miss Monk, had been betrothed to her, and had been bound in honour to marry her, was gall and wormwood to poor, proud young Bernice.

"He loved her first," she thought. "He may love her still. He abandoned her for me in pique at her for some fancied or real grievance, but his heart will go back to her. How handsome she is! I don't blame Roy for loving her, but what shall I do when he tires of me? Oh, I can never be an unloved wife—never, never! Better death."

She quickened her impetuous tread, her face pale, her eyes burning.

Her life at St. Kilda had been so quiet, so peaceful, so monotonous, that her emotions had heretofore been those of a child.

Now passions she had not dreamed that she possessed awoke within her, springing to life full-grown and armed, like Minerva. She was frightened at herself.

But as the minutes still wore on and the marquis did not come, the impetuous young wife grew calmer.

"If I have won my husband I can keep him," she said to herself, proudly. "Even if this story from the servants' hall be true, I am weak and foolish to heed it. I must respect myself too much to even hearken to kitchen gossip, and indeed I did not hearken to it. I should be ashamed to tell Roy what I have heard—ashamed to question him upon such a subject. If he ever loved Miss Monk he is too honourable to give a thought to her now. I can rest upon my husband's love as upon a sure support. He will not fail me."

The thought was like oil upon the troubled waters. She was herself again, bright and sweet as a sunbeam, when Lord Chetwynd's tread rang through the hall and the young lord entered her rooms.

Bernice ran to meet him with a kiss.

"Ah, my radiant little bride!" said the young husband, with lover fondness. "I am sorry that I could not come to you before, but I was detained by old friends. Sylvia has made a state dinner party for us, and the guests are already arriving. I must dress immediately. This is to be a grand *fête* in your honour, little wife. Sylvia has done her best to give your arrival *clat*. And how do you like your new sister, Bernice?"

"She is very handsome," said Bernice, flushing, "and I admire her and like her. Why, she looks like some Eastern queen. I—I wonder, Roy, that you did not marry her instead of me."

The marquis laughed lightly.

The remark had no significance to him, and he did not reply to it save by a caress.

"Roy," exclaimed the young wife, with a passionate thrill in her clear, sweet voice, "you love me, do you not, better than all the world?"

"Better than all the world," he answered, folding her slender, white-robed figure to him. "You are to me the most beautiful woman in all the world. Bernice, the best, the sweetest, the loveliest. There, have I made you any happier, little wife? You must never doubt my love. I could not bear distrust from you. And now I must dress. We will go down together presently."

Bernice alid from his arms in a flutter of happiness and Lord Chetwynd went to his dressing-room.

The young wife was completely reassured. All her doubts and suspicions had vanished.

She sang softly to herself as she stood at the window and watched the line of carriages driving up the avenue, and there was a proud and tender sweetness on her patrician face that was better far than mere beauty of form and colouring.

The evening passed. The guests departed one by one or in groups.

The tenuity went away when the fireworks ceased and the lanterns burned low.

The revelry was over at last, and Lord Chetwynd and Mr. Sanders, the bailiff, were left together in the drawing-room.

The marquis talked with Mr. Sanders a half-hour or more, and the bailiff then took his leave.

His lordship was on the point of arising to rejoin his young wife in her boudoir when the door opened and with a soft rustling of garments Sylvia Monk swept towards him.

He turned his head, and would have arisen, but she glided forward with undulating rush and sat down on a hassock at his side, and laid one hand half-shyly upon his knee, looking up at him with eyes in whose dull blackness was the red glimmer of an evil fire.

"Spare me one moment, Roy," she said, with the soft, caressing manner peculiar to her, "only one moment before you go to her. I want to congratulate you upon your marriage, and to tell you how I already love this little Bernice of yours. She is very lovely, and not with the tame loveliness of our English girls. There is something gipsy-like and strange about her—she is so bright, so piquant, so impulsive."

"I knew you would love her, Sylvia," exclaimed Lord Chetwynd, affectionately. "I want you to be a dear sister to her as you are to me."

"And how you love her, Roy! Can she appreciate this great love of your noble soul? Oh, dear Roy, it must cause you pain and anxiety sometimes to think of the future. I can comprehend just how you feel," and Miss Monk clasped her jewelled hands upon his lordship's knee and looked up at him with sorrowful eyes, the ruddy waves of her velvet robe falling about her, and the tinted light streaming upon her swarthy, handsome face. "I know all the misgivings you must have, dear Roy."

"Misgivings? I do not comprehend, Sylvia."

"Bernice has a loyal heart, and I do not fear that she will ever regret our marriage. She loves me, Sylvia. I know that she loves me."

"How?" demanded Miss Monk, with sudden unrestraint, looking up at him with flaming eyes and white, convulsed features. "How? With the baby love of seventeen—the love of a child for her dolls! What does she know of woman's passion, the love that is madness, anguish, despair?"

"My dear Sylvia, what can you know of such love?"

"And you can ask me that, Roy?" cried Miss Monk, wildly—"you who were my betrothed husband—you in whose hand your dying mother placed mine, and asked Heaven's blessing on our union? You can ask me what I know of love—you whose voice thrills me like Heaven's own music, whose smile stirs my soul to rapture—you whose love, oh Heaven! I flung from me in an idle passion, as if it had been a discarded toy! You did love me, did you not, Roy? You called me sweet names once, I have your letters still, and in them you called me darling. I had a right to love you, for you were my promised husband. And now—and now—you are married to another. I am the poor dependent, outcast from your love, and—don't speak to me—don't upbraid me, Roy—I have wrecked my own life, and I wish I were dead!"

She dropped her head now upon his knee, and sobbed in a very abandonment of despair.

She tottered slowly to her feet, fancying that she heard a light step on the stair. She moved away from the marquis, and then came slowly back to him and seized his hand, crying:

"Forgive me. Forget this scene. I shall hate myself for it always. I did not mean to betray myself like this. As a token that you do not despise me, Roy, give me a brother's kiss. And from this

hour I will be a true and tender sister to you and our sweet Bernice. Only one brother's kiss, Roy, as a token that you do not despise me."

The ears of hate are quicker than those of love. Miss Monk heard a gentle rustling at the door.

She knew that Bernice had grown impatient, and was coming to seek her husband.

And, knowing this, she dropped her head to Chetwynd's shoulder, and he, pitying her and admiring her for the sentiments last upon her lips, put his arm around her, and, bending his face to hers, gave her what she had asked, a brother's kiss.

The door opened softly, and a little dusky head looked in, but was withdrawn upon the instant.

Bernice had seen the embrace and kiss.

She sped like a little mad creature along the hall, up the stairs, and to her own room.

She had scarcely vanished when Miss Monk, knowing and exulting in the work she had accomplished, withdrew herself from Chetwynd's kindly clasp, and glided swiftly away like a serpent, going up to her own room.

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE day in late November, when Lord Chetwynd had driven to Eastbourne with a party of departing guests, his relatives, Miss Monk walked out upon the cliffs overhanging the sea.

The day was wild and dreary, with a premonition of coming winter.

The air was keen, chill and penetrating; the sky of dun gray, the sun hidden behind clouds, the sea ruffled with white caps that sped over the water like frightened gulls.

Miss Monk, clothed in heavy russet silk, and wrapped in the clinging folds of an Indian cashmere shawl, shivered, and muttered some fierce anathemas against the horrible English winters.

She was watching with strange intensity a little boat out on the wild waters.

In that small skiff was her young rival, rowing idly outside the bay, regardless of wind or weather.

Bernice had been used to rowing from her very childhood, and could handle the oars with uncommon skill.

The short, chopping waves of the channel seemed to her like mere child's play after the long swells and raging surfs of the Atlantic.

In moments of restlessness she had grown to indulge in these solitary rows in sight of Chetwynd Park, and Miss Monk always watched her from the shore as a cat watches a mouse, always hoping for a catastrophe that never took place.

As the little boat now careened on one side an exultant gleam came to Miss Monk's eyes.

She fancied for the moment that fate was upon her side, and that an accident was inevitable, but the skiff righted on the instant and shot forward under the powerful impulse of the slender, girlish arms of the rower.

A shadow of disappointment covered Miss Monk's features.

At the same moment a ringing tread, which she knew well, sounded on the rocks behind her, and Lord Chetwynd came up to her.

She greeted him with a smile and the remark:

"We did not expect you back so soon, Roy. Do you see your little wife out on the waters yonder? I am in an agony of fear lest she be overturned and drowned!"

"You need have no fears on Bernice's account," responded Lord Chetwynd, smiling, yet with an anxious expression in his blue eyes as he looked seaward.

"Bernice is an expert oarswoman, and can swim like a duck. She loves the water, as you see, and I haven't the heart to beg her to give up her favourite pleasure. I do not think Bernice is looking well, Sylvia. Don't you notice how thin and pale she is of late?"

"I have noticed it. It is the natural result of her change of mode of life. She has been used to an absolute freedom at St. Kilda, to rambles on the rocks and rows upon the sea, whenever the mood was upon her, but here she finds herself hampered with forms and ceremonies; she must dress, must pay visits, must entertain curious strangers, and no doubt she finds the change from freedom to restraint often unbearable."

His lordship raised his handkerchief, waving it as a signal, and Bernice began rowing ashore.

Excusing himself, his lordship hastened down the cliff by a stair cut in the rocks.

Miss Monk followed him swiftly, her swarthy face glowing.

She hurried out upon the pier after the marquises and stood side by side with him when the boat came alongside.

Bernice had seen her husband and Miss Monk together on the cliff, seemingly in confidential converse, and her heart had swelled with bitterness and jealousy.

But now, as she came up, she looked only wearied and pale.

Her brilliant eyes were burning, and looked unnaturally large in her thin, brown face.

There was something spectral about her, something strange and unreal in her aspect, and Lord Chetwynd's heart gave a great bound of terror as he lifted her from her boat and set her lightly upon the pier.

"How light you are growing, Bernice," he exclaimed. "I fear that our English climate does not agree with you. How would you like a trip to the Continent—a winter in Italy, my darling?"

The pale face brightened.

"Oh, I should like it of all things," Bernice exclaimed, with sudden impetuosity. "A winter at Rome! Oh, Roy, it would be glorious."

"Then set your maid at packing your boxes, Bernice. We will spend our winter at Rome, you and I and Sylvia. When can you ladies be ready to start?"

"I—I don't care to go," said Bernice, abruptly. "After all there is no place like Chetwynd Park. And you are busy with your model houses, and your farms, and all these things would suffer from your absence again so soon. Besides, I—I shrink from going. I am only a bundle of caprices, Roy, you see," she added, feverishly, "and I prefer now to stay at home."

"You shall do just as you like, Bernice," said the marquise, a little bewildered. "You shiver. Let us go into the house."

He put his arm around her to help her up the stair in the rock, but she danced away from him with a little laugh, and flitted on in advance as lightly as a bird.

Lord Chetwynd's anxieties in regard to his young wife were fully aroused.

He watched her as she flitted on over the lawn toward the house, and consulted with Sylvia in regard to her.

Miss Monk was reassuring, yet she managed to deepen his sense of dread and anxiety, and he declared his intention of sending to town for a physician.

On entering the mansion it was found that a party of visitors had arrived from Eastbourne; and Lord and Lady Chetwynd went into the drawing-room.

Miss Monk glided up to her own apartment.

On entering her boudoir she uttered an exclamation of amazement.

The room had an occupant—her brother, Gilbert Monk.

He was lazily reclining in a fauteuil, but arose at her entrance with an exaggerated courtesy, and an affectation of boyish exuberance.

"You here, Gilbert?" said Miss Monk, flinging her hat and shawl upon the nearest chair. "Why, I supposed you were studying law in London."

"I have been making researches," said Gilbert Monk, with an air of reticence. "I have made a startling discovery which is sure to affect my whole future. If I can do what I am now planning, I shall be a rich man, Sylvia."

"Does your discovery affect Bernice? It can't be that you have been searching out and have obtained a clue to her parentage?" cried Miss Monk, excitedly.

Gilbert's face flushed.

He looked uneasy, and exclaimed, with singular haste:

"How could I discover any clue to Lady Chetwynd's parentage? Do you take me for a wizard, or for one of those detectives of romance who always discover immediately whatever they are told to search out? Nonsense. Lady Chetwynd's parentage is a dead secret, and will remain so. I fancy you have a haggard look, Sylvia. When are you going to end all this suspense and misery?"

"Now—this very night," cried Miss Monk, with sudden vehemence, and with a serpent-like hiss. "I have been driven to action at last by seeing Roy's dotting fondness for that girl. He is anxious about her, and fears she will die. It is torture to me to hear him express his anxieties, and to see him hang about her with sickening yearning in his eyes and face. I have borne all that I can bear, I shall remove the obstacle from my path gradually, not to excite suspicion, but the first step shall be taken to-night."

She set her lips together with fierce compression, Gilbert Monk was not startled, nor did he betray any emotion.

"I suppose you will want to talk the matter over with old Raguee," he observed. "I will leave you to discuss your plans with her, while I pay my respects to my lady. I'll see you at dinner."

He hastened to take his leave.

As he closed the door behind him he heard his sister summon old Raguee.

With a strange smile on his boyish visage he hurried along the hall to the door of his sister's bed-

chamber, glanced around him, making sure he was unobserved, and then softly turned the knob. The door was locked.

Nothing daunted by so slight an obstacle, he drew from his pocket a slender wire and turned the key in the lock, shooting back the bolt almost noiselessly. Then he opened the door and stole in.

As he expected, old Raguee had joined her mistress in the boudoir, and the intervening doors were but slightly ajar.

He locked the door by which he had entered and crept stealthily into the dressing-room, the sound of his footsteps being muffled by the thick velvet pile on the floor.

He glided across the room to one of the windows and hid himself in the thick folds of scarlet velvet laden with gold embroidery.

"Good!" he said to himself. "I can hear what they say by close listening. I haven't spent my month up in London for nothing. I have made a discovery which Lord Chetwynd, the marchioness and Sylvia would give all they have to know, and as a consequence of that discovery, I have a stake in this business that no one dreams of. I shall make my fortune out of Bernice Chetwynd before I've done with her. But I must be as secret as death and as watchful as Argus. What's that they're saying? Ah! they are coming in here."

He shrank back farther within the folds of the curtains, holding his breath, as Miss Monk came swiftly, with simious rush, into her dressing-room, followed by her Indian nurse.

CHAPTER IX.

THE hidden presence of Gilbert Monk in the dressing-room of his sister was not suspected by Miss Monk or old Raguee.

"So much excitement is not good for you, missy," said the old Hindoo woman, with an anxious frown on her dusky forehead. "These rages of yours use up your strength terribly. You'll go off in one of them some time unless you use self-control. That is the way your mother went. She got angry at a servant and raged like a mad creature, and dropped off in a fit—just as you will do if you don't save your strength and learn self-control. Let me get your soothing draught."

Old Raguee brought out a glass goblet half filled with a colourless liquid, which was simply a soothing draught.

Miss Monk drank it eagerly and leaned back upon her cushions, while Raguee replaced the goblet and locked the cabinet.

"I have heard," said Miss Monk, "that your brothers are Thugs, and that you, in your youth, belonged to one of the five orders of that great sect, and that you were a *sotha*, or entrapper—that you lured men to their destruction at the hands of the stranglers. I know that you care as little for human life as brute existence. Now I want you to help me."

"Yes, missy, what shall old Raguee do?"

"Make the way clear for me to become Lady Chetwynd," hissed Miss Monk, bending forward and resting her head like a serpent, while a red gleam shot from her dull black eyes. "Lord Chetwynd was betrothed to me. I love him. I will marry him. What is this pale island girl, this nobody, that she should plant herself in my pathway? She must be removed."

"But how?" questioned old Raguee, staring intently into the fire. "These English are sharp and shrewd, yet not sharp enough to find out old Raguee," she added, complacently. "Raguee works in secret; her touch is like that of the lightning—it blasts where it falls. You shall see what Raguee can do."

She gathered herself from the floor, again produced her bunch of keys, and unlocked the Indian cabinet.

Gilbert Monk held the heavy curtain together with his hands and peered out between the folds, holding his breath, and remaining fixed and motionless as a statue.

The Hindoo woman groped in the interior of the cabinet and touched a hidden spring somewhere at the back.

Monk heard a drawer shoot out from its concealment, and Raguee then brought out a tiny box that glittered in the firelight like a jewel.

Raguee resumed her place upon the hearth-rug, turning the box over in her brown hands.

She opened her dress and pulled forth from its concealment a long golden chain, to which was attached a tiny golden key. She applied this key to the box and lifted the jewelled lid.

The contents of the box consisted of three tiny vials of clear, colourless liquid like water, of three tiny packets of powder enclosed in thin oiled silk; and of three vials of infinitesimal globules which resembled bubbles of air seen upon troubled waters.

These latter vials the Hindoo woman took out and carefully examined. The glass stoppers were tied down with a bit of oiled silk or bladder.

"One of these globules will dissolve instantly in any liquid," said the Hindoo woman, handling the vials tenderly. "They are colourless, you see, and are so small that one alone can hardly be seen. They are swift in their action, and leave no trace. They are distilled from deadly plants that grow in the depths of the shaded jungle. This one is labelled 'heart disease.' One who takes one of these airy globules in this vial will die suddenly, as by heart disease."

"That will not do," said Miss Monk, shivering, in spite of her evil self-command, at the cold and passionless tone of her Hindoo attendant. "The girl is young and strong; she is not likely to have heart disease."

Old Ragee put down the vial, and took up another. This vial is labelled 'fever.' One taking a single globule of this in liquid is seized with a heavy chill, followed by fever, which runs a course of a week. The ordinary remedies for fever but stimulate the action of this poison, and the patient, after days of delirium, dies. The effect is natural. The most suspicious person in the world could not suspect the use of this poison. It has no smell, no taste, and it leaves no trace. It is a concentrated and deodorized malaria, as one might say. The girl is pale of late, and drooping. What wonder that she should have fever?"

"I like that," said Miss Monk, slowly. "We will use it. Stay. What is in the third vial?"

The Hindoo replaced the second vial before taking out the third. The precaution was necessary, for all the vials were precisely alike, and the labels upon the second and third vials were identical.

"This third vial is also labelled 'fever,'" said old Ragee. "It needs another word to distinguish it from the second vial, for its properties are widely different, although its mode of action is the same—there will be delirium, precisely as with the other. I can distinguish between the two vials by their position in the box, and by the fact that when the two vials are together the globules in this last appear a trifle smaller than those in the other. The difference is hardly to be detected, however, and only by comparison. One who has taken a globule from it apparently dies of fever after a few days' delirium and illness, but he does not die. He falls into a trance, as I might call it, which is the twin sister of death. The body becomes cold and cadaverous, the nose becomes pinched, the eyes sunken. The semblance of death is marvellously real. Life is held in abeyance for three days, and then the mind and body rouse from their long torpor, but for weeks afterward a great weakness is upon the patient, and exertion, thought even is difficult. If it is desired to defer the awakening to six days it can be easily done. A second globule can be dropped in a tumbler of water and a teaspoonful of the liquid can be forced between the seemingly dead person's lips. But you will not want this preparation. Take a globule from the second vial."

"But how am I to carry it?" asked Miss Monk. "I will get you a very small empty vial which I have in my room," said Ragee. "But first I will take out the globule. I do not like to leave my box of secrets open."

She produced a slender penknife and deftly removed the silk cap of vial number two, and took from it a single globule, tiny and transparent as an air bubble.

She laid this globule upon a small table near at hand, replaced and re-enclosed the stopper, and restored the vial to its place.

"I notice that the cap on number three is loose," she said, taking up the third vial. "But the drug retains its full strength so long as the little crystals remain unbroken. The silk seems to have rubbed against the partition of the box and is broken. I must replace it with a fresh cap. I will leave the box in your care, missy, while I go for the silk and the vial."

She placed the jewelled box on Miss Monk's knee, and went away through the bed-chamber to her own room, which communicated with that of her mistress by a narrow private passage leading out of a trunk room beyond the bath-room.

"What power lies in these simple globes of glass," she muttered, fingering the vials. "Ragee is a queen, and these are her soldiers who fight for her and make her path clear. I have heard that she has been suspected of using these things, but no one ever dared accuse her of doing so. Ah, what is that?"

She started, and the vial dropped from her fingers to its cushioned socket, as a knock sounded on the door of her boudoir.

She hesitated, with a glance in the direction in which her attendant had gone, but Ragee had barely reached her chamber.

The knock was repeated, and Miss Monk recognized it as the knock of young Lady Chetwynd.

"I must go to her, I suppose," she said, half aloud. "What can she want with me? Oh, she has come for that last piece of Claribel's music which I offered her at luncheon. She won't detain me a minute."

She arose, deposited the box on the table beside the single deadly capsule laid out for her use, flung a newspaper over it, and went into her boudoir, closing the door carefully behind her.

Then Gilbert Monk stirred in his concealment, putting out his head and listening.

"Now," he muttered, "I see my way clear. My whole course has been marked out by these women for me. One bold step—I have time, I think—and my fortune is made."

He crept like a shadow from the folds of the curtains, and crossed the floor upon his toes.

He reached the table—he paused—listened.

He lifted the rustling paper, took up the "vial number three," to which the torn silken cap still clung, pulled out the tiny stopper, and rolled two capsules out upon his hand. Then he replaced the vial as he had found it, and again he paused to listen.

He caught up the globule from "vial number two," which Sylvia had chosen, and replaced it with one he had taken from "vial number three," then, with the two globules he had secured, he fled guiltily back to his concealment.

And not too soon—the curtains were yet waving under his touch when Miss Monk returned to her dressing-room and resumed her seat, taking the box again in her hands.

And in another moment old Ragee also appeared, entering as swiftly and noiselessly as a shadow.

The Hindoo woman sat down again on the hearth-rug and arranged her vials, without seeing that one had been opened in her absence.

This done, she carefully restored the box to its hiding-place in the cabinet and secured the latter.

Then she took up the single capsule which Monk had exchanged for the one Sylvia had chosen and dropped it into a tiny vial which she had brought from her room for that purpose.

"You can uncork this vial in your pocket, missy," she said, delivering the deadly agent, "and you will find chances to use it without being seen."

"I shall use it before the day is over," said Miss Monk, in her soft, hissing voice. "In a fortnight or less Lady Chetwynd will repose in the family tomb in Chetwynd Church. And now I am tired. I will lie down for an hour before I begin to dress for dinner, Ragee, and you must sit by me as usual while I sleep. I am afraid to be alone."

The two adjourned to the bed-chamber, leaving the door of communication ajar.

Gilbert Monk remained a long time in his concealment, not daring to attempt his escape.

At last the regular breathing of Miss Monk announced that she slept.

The silence of old Ragee seemed to indicate that she was also nodding.

With sudden and desperate boldness Gilbert Monk stole from the protection of the heavy curtain, and crept across the dressing-room and into the boudoir. He had not been heard.

He hurried softly to the door, unlocked it, and slipped into the hall.

There was no one to be seen. Lady Chetwynd's doors were shut.

Monk waited only long enough to turn the key of the boudoir door in the lock with the wire he had before used, and then crept stealthily to his own room.

CHAPTER X.

Miss Monk appeared in the drawing-room half an hour before dinner, as cool and self-possessed as if no thought of evil had ever entered her mind—as if even then she were not meditating the basest act of treachery, the deadliest crime known to humanity.

Miss Monk sent a sweeping glance around her as she approached the fire.

The grand, long room seemed untenanted, but her keen gaze espied in the deep recess of a distant window seat the gleam of wine-hued and silken drapery, which she knew belonged to Bernice.

She turned from her course and approached the window seat with a swift, undulating grace, and, drawing aside the curtains, looked down upon the little figure that crouched on the wide window ledge.

Bernice looked up at her with a half-tortured, half-defiant expression upon a face full of infinite woe and gathering despair.

There was a stormy look in the wide, brilliant eyes, and the broad, low brow, under masses of blue-black hair, was contracted as in deep mental pain.

"Not moping, Bernice?" said Miss Monk, with a caressing gaiety.

"There is a world of sadness in your eyes and face. Why, you have a regular attack of the migraines," she added. "It's fortunate we have only gentlemen to dine to-day, Bernice. Ladies would notice your red eyes and the general disturbance that has come upon you. You are homesick, dear, that's all. Why not tell Roy all your troubles and be comforted?"

"Ah, I cannot tell all my troubles to him," said Bernice, with a half-sob. "If they were of a kind that I could tell him they would be easy to bear. But, oh, Sylvia, I am afraid that our marriage is all a mistake. That is my chief trouble, and how can I bear it? Don't speak to me, don't try to comfort me. I cannot take comfort from you."

"Bernice," said Miss Monk, in a low voice, "you think you have all to bear. Let me undeceive you. There are other sad hearts under this roof than yours. Roy himself has troubles to which yours are the merest trifles. No, I do not mean that Roy has sorrows; if he has it is not for me to speak of them. What should he have to trouble him? But my life, Bernice, is dark and drear. A year ago I was the happiest of women. I was betrothed to the one I loved, and he loved me with the first love of his life, that grand, overmastering passion which never, never dies. It's a sad story, Bernice. I only tell it you that you may see how small your griefs are beside mine. He loved me—he loves me yet! Such love as his cannot die! But I was proud and wilful, and we quarrelled. He was goaded to recklessness—he went away—he— But I have said enough. In his pride and anger and mad recklessness he placed a barrier between him and me that neither he nor I can pass. But I know he loves me yet. He will never be my husband in this life, Bernice, and in the beyond there is no marriage. By one rash act, bitterly regretted by him and me, he has divided us to all eternity. Have I not much to bear, Bernice? Can your childish griefs compare with mine? My story is new to you, you have never suspected it, I know. I should never have told it you but to teach you that one may live on in patience when one's heart is broken!"

"Do you suppose he loves you still?" asked Bernice, presently, in a hoarse, strained voice.

"Yes," said Miss Monk, hesitatingly. "I do not mind confessing to you, Bernice, since you do not know my lover, nor can ever know him, that he loves me still, with more than the old love. He—has told me so of late—this very day."

She paused and covered her face with her hands.

"It has been a cruel mistake, Sylvia," Bernice said, brokenly, her passionate young voice quivering. "I am not the child you think me. I seem suddenly to have had my womanhood forced upon me. You are a woman and so would pity me if you knew, if you could guess— Oh, Sylvia, I am sorry for you—for Roy—for us all. But it's too late now."

"Bear up, as I do, Bernice. Hark! Some one is coming. What will Roy say to see you like this? You must keep up appearances even though your heart break, Bernice. That is the lesson I have had to learn. Force a smile, dear, and put on the mein of a happy and beloved wife, or our guests will say that Roy is not good to you."

Bernice bore her part at the banquet with more than usual silence, but with graceful ease and self-possession.

The ladies retired from the dinner-table after the dessert, leaving the gentlemen over their wine.

"Will you pour out the coffee, Bernice, or shall I?" asked Miss Monk. "You are worn out. Permit me to do it, dear."

"If you will be so good," said Bernice, wearily, "I do not care for coffee, Sylvia."

Miss Monk glided to the table, one hand in her pocket, her fingers pulling nervously at the cork of the vial therein.

Extracting the cork readily, it being but loosely put in, she dropped the poisonous globule into her hand.

Then her dark hands fluttered over the table and the transparent capsule fell unseen and unsuspected into one of the tiny cups.

Bernice was bending over the fire, her face averted.

Miss Monk smiled with complacent satisfaction, and daintily filled the poisoned cup with sugar, cream and coffee, and brought it to Bernice with a Judas smile and tenderness.

"The coffee is strong, dear," she said. "Drink. It will do you good. No, you shall not refuse it," she added, playfully, yet with hidden anxiety. "Strong coffee is a tonic for the nerves, Bernice. You must drink it."

The young marchioness yielded, and drank to the dregs the poisoned up that was held to her lips.

Miss Monk waited in dead silence until the empty cup was given back to her.

Then she went to the table and silently poured for herself a portion of coffee and drank it eagerly. Then she walked to the window, her pulses throbbing, her brain almost reeling, her soul in a tumult of wicked triumph.

"It is done!" she said to herself, with a backward glance over her shoulder. "She has taken the drug. She is surely doomed. She will complain of illness within an hour. She will die within the week."

(To be continued.)



[THE HARBOUR OF REFUGE.]

THE PRIDE OF MAPLE LAWN.

'Twas a beautiful inland stream that flowed by rich, yellow cornfields and meadows of purest green in its tortuous course toward the sea.

Miles and miles away it mingled with salt water, and was lost in its wide expanse, but here it rippled sweetly along, washing its verdant banks with sparkling drops, and glistening like a line of diamonds set in emeralds and topazes.

It was the pride of Maple Lawn, this little river. In summer snowy sails dotted its bosom, in winter its congealed surface was alive with merry skaters.

This day the June sunshine caused each ripple to scintillate with beauty, or perhaps I should have said each wave, for there was a lively breeze. But there was only one boat on its waters—a fact of rare occurrence—and that was skimming along like a bird, the spray dashing from its bows, and the white sail filled smooth.

In the stern, with the tiller in his left hand, and his right near the cleats, sat a youth of almost effeminate beauty, which was only relieved by the firm lips and bright, steady eyes.

At his left on the port side was a young girl, not beautiful, but possessing an irresistible power of attraction in her calm, tender face and large brown eyes.

Her lips, red as the ruby, and delicately curved, were just apart, revealing the tips of her white, even teeth.

"Isn't it lovely, Nellie?" said the youth, glancing at the glistening spray and the singing waters.

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice, as she gazed upward at the clear, azure sky, and then looked away over the warm, rich country, fertile in fruit and beauty.

"We have known each other ever since we were children, Nellie, and we never have exchanged an unpleasant word, never," he continued, slowly, as if the reflection made him happy.

She smiled that glowing, sympathetic smile which was beauty in itself, and bent her brown eyes upon him.

It was answer enough—he did not care for words—he could read a sweeter answer in her glance.

"It would be hard to separate now, to sunder all the dear old ties, and have no future to look forward to—no future wreathed with the flowers of the past, wouldn't it, Nellie?"

His voice was modulated again to that yearning tone as he uttered the last words.

"Yes, Rupert," she answered, frankly, a faint colour stealing over her face.

"We could never be happy, I think, neither of us, if we should try to forget our life here and the bright hours we have passed together. It seems to me that our lives have already become part of each other. Why, we never see a book, an animal, or even a curious cloud on the sky but that we must have each other's opinion of it before it becomes beautiful to us. Our tastes, our thoughts, our hopes are entwined, and may I never live to see them torn apart—that's all."

It was the rapture of a young, innocent heart, uncorroded by the cares of the world.

Nellie Hanover averted her head that he might not see the great tear drops in her eyes. His words found an echo in her own nature. In their years of close companionship she had given her first, best, and purest love to Rupert Maylie.

"If there is anything true in this world—some people say there is not, you know—it must be our love for each other, Nellie, and I don't believe that time or distance will break it. There must be some redeeming quality in weak human nature, and that must be love. We can't have peace without love. You know, I know, that we are dearer to each other than life itself, and, knowing this, we cannot but remain true. I wouldn't bind you by a promise in set words to remain true to me, because I believe nothing would make you do otherwise, and I am sure you feel the same towards me."

"Are you going away, Rupert?" she asked, tremulously.

"Yes, to-morrow," he replied in a hoarse voice, and then he arose, loosened the lanyard from the cleats, and, springing forward, eased the shoulder and took in the sail.

Nellie burst out weeping with a childish abandonment to grief that was touching from its very innocence. Her true, simple heart knew no disguise; her nature, obedient to natural feelings untarnished by polite deceit, sought solace in tears.

Rupert, struggling to maintain his composure, seated himself in the waist and shipped the oars. He must have something to take his attention from Nellie's grief and his own sad thoughts, and so he rowed with a sort of desperation until he came to the little inlet opposite the maiden's home. Guiding the frail craft towards its mooring-place, he drew in his oars and leaped ashore. Not until the boat was made fast and he ready to help Nellie out did he speak, then he begged her not to weep, and nearly choked himself in forcing the words from his lips.

"I can't help it, Rupert," she exclaimed as she placed her hand in his and stepped upon the land, then she covered her face again, and he, winding his arm around her waist, guided her to the little grove just behind the house.

Here they sat down upon a rustic seat. Minutes passed in silence.

"I shall come back, Nellie, and then we shall be happy, for we shall never part again. It is true it will be a long time, two or three years perhaps, and great changes may take place, but I shall think only of you and of the little home we are to have, where we shall be as happy as two people can be on earth. It will all come, darling. I believe it to the depths of my soul. We have only to be patient a little while," he said, pressing her slight form close to him.

She uncovered her face and tried to smile, but the effort ended in a sigh.

"I shall write to you every week, and oftener if I can, and tell you of my prospects, and in thinking of the joy to come you will shorten many long hours. You see, dearest, there are no griefs without some rays of gladness," he continued, caressingly.

Her cheeks reddened with a grateful flush, her eyes shone upon him with devotion in their clear depths. He gazed upon her with veneration, as if she were indeed a creature of ethereal mould, and then he embraced her again with all the fervour of a yearning heart.

The setting sun crimsoned the West with his parting rays.

"I must now leave you, my beloved," said Rupert, arising, but still holding her quivering hands in his. "We have memories of the past to cheer us, and hopes of the future to repay us for the sad present. There, I must cease or I shall lose my voice—man as I am. Good-bye, dearest."

She was still and pale now, and her features gleamed cold with grief. She shivered as his last warm kiss greeted her, and then, turning into another path, she walked slowly toward home, her eyes downcast, her hands clasped firmly together.

"It is the only way, my child!"

John Hanover uttered the words in a low, wailing voice and gazed upon his daughter in mingled supplication and despair. She stood before him like a statue, her arms folded across his breast, her lips firmly compressed, and her white face rigid with a terrible sorrow.

"It's the only way," he went on, frantically. "I am ruined! I strove for money—I have reaped dishonour! I am an old man, I have but few years left, and unless you marry Martin Farnsworth I shall spend those few years in prison—my name and family disgraced for ever."

"Great Heaven! is it so bad as that?"

"Yes—one breath would hurl me into a felon's cell. It is appalling, it is maddening, but it is true! I confess it with shame, for I am an old man, and years should have made me stronger and nobler, but—"

He paused, a spasm of pain distorted his features, his hands clenched his white hair, and tears rolled down his wrinkled cheeks.

Nellie shuddered, and her blood seemed to turn to ice in her veins. The sweet past seemed a field of the dead strewn with blighted hopes. She saw her only parent bowed with an awful grief, and she the only one who could save him, but—at the sacrifice of her conscience, heart, and earthly happiness. Was it right to ask so much?

"Will you do it? Think how I have loved you, how I have nourished you in my heart," he cried, placing his quivering hands on her shoulder and gazing wildly into her face. "Will you keep me from prison—from an infamous death?"

It required all her strength for the girl to control herself.

Years had given her fortitude, else she would have gone mad under this mental strain.

"Let us talk calmly, father. One hour can make no difference in the result either way. Tell me exactly how you are situated."

"I have overdrawn my bank account to a large amount and sunk it in speculation. Farnsworth is manager of the bank. He holds me in his grasp. But why repeat these harrowing details? I cannot consider them—it racks my brain. Speak, Nellie, it is useless to argue."

"Be patient, please. This house and land will bring more than that."

"Oh, you will crase me, girl—you pierce my heart with your ignorant words. This place is mortgaged and has been for months. I can't sell it—I am hemmed in—I have no resource but you."

"I must bury my very life, and yield myself up to a stranger as a ransom for your liberty? Father, in your sorrow do you give one thought to the sacrifice you ask of me?"

"Of course I do, but you are young, and you will learn to love him. You will forget your infatuation for Maylie, and rejoice in having saved your poor old father and his name from blemish."

"Oh, Heaven, give me wisdom!" cried Nellie, working her fingers together and raising her eyes upward imploringly.

John Hanover gazed upon her tremulously, his lips parted, and his breath coming thick and fast. He could not look into her heart and see the struggle there, he could only think of his own peril, and his natural desire to keep his name unstained.

Moments passed, and the girl yet stood silent and prayerful.

"Oh, child, don't prolong this agony—don't! I wish I had another chance, but I haven't—I haven't," he moaned, plaintively.

"Father," she said, her voice clear and firm, "I have looked at this in its every phase. What you ask of me is wrong. I love you, but I must be just to myself. One has no right to ask another to sacrifice all that earth holds dear that one may escape the consequences of one's own acts. I seem harsh. I am only practical. I will share your grief with you, but I cannot sell myself and break my plighted troth. No, Heaven requires no such sacrifice from woman—it is wicked."

"Then you will see me dragged away and imprisoned! Oh, thankless child! I did not think you would desert me—"

"Stop! I have not deserted you, neither do I intend to do so. You think me selfish but never dream that you were selfish in asking this monstrous sacrifice. What has woman to hope for in this world but love? Oh, father, reproach me not, lest your own words make you miserable."

Was this strong, brave woman the little Nellie of five years ago?

Ah, how nobly had grown those little qualities which were then hidden, but now shone forth in majestic grandeur.

"I will tell you what we are to do. Have the house sold, pay off the mortgage, leave the surplus for Farnsworth, and we will seek another country."

"What? You are losing your reason. Do you counsel me to fly like a thief? Are these my daughter's words?"

"Dishonour must come. I am willing to share it with you. Were I a parent my own disgrace would be preferable to such a course as you have proposed. Seek not to distort my words. I choose the lesser evil. I will escape with you from the clutches of this rapacious man who makes you need the price of your daughter's lifelong happiness. I will bear with you poverty, odium, misery, but I will not sacrifice my woman's heart!"

Her slight form expanded, her face glowed with the inspiration of her resolution, her eyes gleamed brilliantly, and her little hands, clasped as if in prayer, showed where her faith and consciousness of right were anchored.

"Then adieu to everything I have held dear. Your father becomes a fugitive—a hunted criminal at your behest."

"And I share the infamy," she answered, composedly.

"Do you dream, foolish girl, that Rupert Maylie will ever look at you, much less love you after this?"

"I believe in his truth. If he should prove treacherous that would not make my action wrong. Whatever comes I shall have no remorse."

"Your trust is childish," he exclaimed, in mingled anger and grief. "You wreck your family name for a weak, selfish passion! Well, let it be so, but when I'm gone you will repent and think of my anguish."

"Is not mine as great? Oh, father, forget not my sufferings in nourishing your own."

Her father bent his head upon his hands and groaned aloud.

He could not see that her sorrow and disgrace came of his act, that they would last through more years than his; he only felt his own needs.

No more was said, and Nellie went to her room to reflect in solitude upon the great and terrible change that was about to come on her life.

The day following Mr. Hanover made his arrangements to carry out his daughter's advice, but with shame, regret and dismay.

He was still blind to her feelings, and thought she had acted ungratefully.

In the afternoon, much to her astonishment and terror, Mr. Farnsworth called, and Nellie was summoned to the library.

There was no appeal now; the man had suspected that John Hanover was trying to outwit him, and he was determined to have the affair settled at once. The crisis had come unexpectedly, but it must be met.

Nellie, very pale, but composed, entered the apartment, and bowed, with cold reserve, to the bank manager.

Her father, anxious and tremulous, regarded her beseechingly.

"I suppose it is needless to make any extended explanation," said Mr. Farnsworth, politely, but with a certain exultation in his tone. "I am here to solicit your hand in marriage, Miss Hanover. As you are aware, I am a man of position and great wealth—"

"Then give my father one month to raise money to pay your claim," interposed Nellie, fearlessly.

"Pray don't intrude matters of business just at this time," he resumed, smiling. "I offer you my hand. I crave your answer."

"For Heaven's sake, Nellie, remember me," whispered Mr. Hanover, his face ghastly, his form shaking like a leaf.

"I ask a week for consideration, sir, at the same time thanking you for the honour you would confer upon me," she rejoined.

"You can have one hour," said the suitor, with a mocking bow; "at the end of that time I shall return to this room for your answer. Mr. Hanover, we will leave the lady alone, if you please."

The father arose and accompanied his master from the room.

Nellie sank into a chair and pressed her hands to her brow.

What should she do? The hope of escape had been even sweet compared with the alternative, but now it was thrust back upon her. Unable to bear alone the tumult of feelings that racked her heart and brain, she dropped upon her knees and prayed with all the fervour of a pure and devout heart. A half-hour passed. She looked up and beheld a strong, handsome man standing before her, his eyes bent upon her affectionately. Was it a dream? She knew that face, though time had placed its disguising marks upon it, yet she could not speak—her voice seemed lost in the wonder that flooded her mind.

"Nellie, my own sweet love. My little Nellie!"

"Oh, Rupert!"

She flew to his arms and nestled her head upon the breast where in childhood she had rested when tired with play, where in girlhood she had felt the first impulse of love, and where now in grief she found the first moment of comfort that had been hers for months. But it lasted only a few minutes, then her distracting thoughts returned in full force, and she glanced apprehensively at the clock. It lacked but five minutes of the hour. Hurriedly she told her lover of the position in which she was placed, and begged his advice. He had not the time to answer ere the door was pushed open, and Mr. Farnsworth entered. Pausing on the threshold and gazing at the lovers with disdain, he said:

"Ah! I really beg pardon. It would be superfluous to ask for an answer under the circumstances, Miss Hanover. I regret that your father must— you understand of course."

Mr. Hanover was directly behind him, and as he heard these words his spirit sank within him.

"Stop one moment, Mr. Martin Farnsworth," interposed Rupert, coming forward. "I have a word to say. John Hanover owes nothing to you or your bank. I have a certificate to that effect in my pocket."

"Very glad, I'm sure."

"Yes, doubtless. Look at me again. You know me now. I am from London. I saw your wife just before I came away—"

"Insolence! Be careful, sir."

"Don't bluster or brag. I had occasion to chastise you once, and if you tempt me I'll do it again. I am boyish yet in some respect. Now listen to me. You have done decently well since you have been here, and your money has got you a position, but you have treated your wife shamefully. She is a good, noble woman, and if you don't return to her, and behave yourself I'll make the place too hot to hold you within twenty-four hours. When I say something you know I mean it. Don't let me hear any evasions or threats, but tell me if you will do as I command."

"Yes, but you'll hear from me again, Rupert Maylie!" hissed Farnsworth, clenching his hands.

"Bah! Leave us and be cautious how you act."

With a muttered anathema the discomfited suitor withdrew, and Mr. Hanover glanced from his daughter to Rupert in amazement.

"You placed the money to papa's credit, didn't you, Rupert?" queried Nellie, the lovelight shining softly in her brown eyes.

"Yes, darling. I found out this affair in a singular way. One of the tellers of the bank—an acquaintance of mine—wrote to me of the circumstance, and I resolved to come on at once. How did I get so much money? Fortune has been lavish of her favours. I am a partner in a large, mercantile house, and, besides, an uncle left me quite a large property. I told you, my beautiful, my blessed, that we should be happy."

"And you deserve to be, my noble boy," said Mr. Hanover, grasping his hand. "The logic of events has proved my Nellie right. Heaven bless you both."

And Rupert returned to London with Nellie as his bride.

W. G.

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"WHERE am I? In the name of high Heaven, where am I?"

This was the exclamation of Edward Zane when he woke from what to him appeared like a long, deep slumber—a sleep full of horrible dreams. His head was racked with pain, the air he breathed seemed almost stifling, a dim light revealed curtains about the couch on which he reclined, that was all.

"Hush, dearest, do not talk, you are very ill." This was spoken in a low whisper by a voice, kind and sweet, while a soft hand was laid upon his hot brow.

"Anna, dear, Anna, is it you?"

"It is one who loves you better, far better than life," came, in another low, whispering tone, while soft arms embraced him.

He could not see the face, yet now he knew that it was not Anna, not her voice.

And he felt a rocking motion, which told him, as thought came to his aid, that he was on the water.

"Where am I? How came I here?" he asked, more loudly. "I was with Stella, trying to save her life."

"You did save it, best and noblest of men, at the risk of your own; for, as poison kills poison, so the antidote which saved me nearly killed you."

"Why, it is Stella who speaks. For Heaven's sake, relieve this suspense and tell me where I am."

"I will in one moment, precious love, but first take this cooling draught to give you strength to listen. Swallow it at once draught and you will not heed its unpleasant nature!"

She raised his head, the glass was at his lips, a parching thirst impelled him to drink, and he drank.

"Great Heaven! It was brandy," he cried. "You have made me break my pledge. Oh, Stella, Stella, why is this?"

"To save your life, beloved one. You were almost gone. The doctor said you might die. I wanted to die with you if you did, and I had you brought here to your own yacht, for I knew if they found you had gone to my house they would drag you from me as they did before. Be calm, do not get excited, your precious life is in danger."

"Oh, Stella, what have you done?"

"Proved my love for you, as you did yours for me when you flew to save the life I had wished to destroy. Oh, make that life valuable now by your kindness. Ah, your eye brightens, your cheek flushes, you are better."

"Yes, the drink runs riot through my veins," he murmured. "How strange. It seems to thrill my whole system with a delicious sensation. The acute pain is leaving my head. I feel a sweet drowsiness coming upon me. Would it were death."

An indistinct murmur fell from his lips as he laid his head back on the pillow, for he was already asleep once more. She did not wish him to awake too suddenly to realities—at least not until drink had once more gained a complete ascendancy over him.

"Well, how goes it?"

Barnabus Bludge asked this question as he looked into the room where Stella Hayden sat by her sleeping victim.

"Well," said the woman, abruptly, "why do we not put to sea at once? there will be no safety till we are far away from here."

"Volchini will not go till he has got his music-girl on board. I have a little errand, too, to attend to before I leave."

"Peste! Why not defer all this till we get through with him and his fortune?"

"Yes, but a delay of a few hours will not injure us. No one will trace him or us here. If they did, we are safe as long as the wind blows; there is not a craft afloat that can compete with us for speed."

"Well, I suppose I must bear the delay."

"He sleeps, I see; has he been awake yet?"

"Yes, and I had to give him another dose of

medicine. When he wakes again the first thing he will ask for will be brandy. His appetite is already back."

"So much for temperance, eh? Let one of its votaries get into our hands and we will show him that, strong as his theories are, our sharp practice will upset them. Ah! I hear Volchini talking to Phorresterre excitedly. I must go and see what is the matter. We must have peace on board now."

The gambler withdrew, and then with a low-spoken expression of hate for him Stella Hayden turned to look at her sleeping dupe.

But some words reached her from the outer cabin, where Phorresterre and Volchini had just been joined by Bludge, which were not pleasant:

"It means an expedition of police are coming down the river. Look out for danger."

"Well, we have plenty of wind—nothing can beat us. It is as dark as Erebus. What have we to fear?"

"Nothing, if the wind lasts; everything should it die away—if we hang about the coast."

"We will not after to-night. I can do all I want to do in a few hours on shore," said Volchini. "My prize will not be hard to capture. All who guard her are bought, and that is enough for me?"

"You wish to go on shore, too, Mr. Bludge?"

"Yes, I have business too."

"Well, you know your own affairs best. But we had better go on deck and keep a look-out on every hand," said the captain.

They went and Stella Hayden followed, for she wished to hear more.

The water was very rough and the wind blew so furiously that the yacht under a single-reefed mainsail, foresail with the bonnet off, and only the fore-staysail set forward, had all she could carry with the wind a little abaft her starboard-beam.

At the same time a small sloop under close reefed mainsail and jib, was plunging furiously through a heavy sea.

On the deck of this sloop there were five rough men clad in seaman's garb.

In the little cabin of that sloop a boy with small but sharp eyes sat near a little girl—our "little Nellie" we may as well at once say.

She was kneeling and saying a prayer, for she was about to lay down on a bed which was fixed for her.

The boy watched her curiously and listened to her words while she spoke her simple prayer.

"Who learned you to do that?" he asked, as she unclosed her clasped hands and rose from her knees.

"My dear grandma," she answered, sadly, "her you took me away from last night."

"Hada't you never no mammy?"

"I expect I had; if I ever saw her I was too little to remember it."

"Nor no brothers or sisters either?"

"I expect not. I never heard of any."

"I wish I was good and could be your brother."

"You could be good even if you weren't my brother."

"I'd like to know how."

"Pray to Heaven."

"They told me that, or something like it at the Mission, but I don't know how to pray. I tried once, and I was nearly choked when I got as far as: Our Father, 'cause I never had no father or mother either, that I know of."

"Will you not let me teach you how to pray?" asked Nellie, timidly.

"Aren't you afraid of me?—you know how bad I am. I steal, and I helped to kill, too, last night."

"No, I am not afraid of you or anybody else just now, for I said my prayer and I asked Heaven to protect me, and I know that I am safe. Now, if you'll kneel, I'll teach you Our Father who art in Heaven."

The boy rose from his seat and seemed inclined to do what she asked when suddenly on deck they heard the captain shout:

"Look out—look out—there is the police boat close aboard."

The boy rushed on deck and the girl followed.

And there indeed could be seen, close to them, a small black steamer covered, it seemed to the child, with men—a great glaring light shining from her on the sloop and on another vessel under sail but a little way from the sloop.

She heard a loud shouting, and the steamer seemed to be steering so as to run right into the large vessel under sail, when she heard a shriek from a woman on that vessel and her own name called in wild accents:

"Nellie—my Nellie!"

Then there was a wild flash, a sound like thunder, and the light on the steamer went out and all was darkness in a second.

"I expect the police boat has blown up, Jim," said the captain of the sloop, coolly, to his mate.

Biler burst, perhaps—her light is out, any way. Mighty close shave for us or somebody else. Wonder who was on the schooner?"

"Why the woman who I priggled the diamonds from," cried Ragged Dick. "Her who wants little Curly here. Didn't you hear her yell Nellie when she seen her? She wants the girl bad—she'll give a rare lot for her."

"Well," said the captain. "We'll meet again, and if the woman bids right she can have little Curly. What d'ye s'pose has become of the police boat, Jim?"

"Gone down, perhaps. I don't see no lights—I don't hear no noises. I think she's done for. She might better have been at home."

"Dick, take the gal below and send her to bed. We're going to be under way all night."

Dick obeyed orders and the lesson in praying was forgotten.

Nellie was wondering who that handsome lady could be who called her name.

When both the captain and Mr. Bennett saw the schooner and close to her a smaller vessel steering in the same direction, the course of the tug was instantly changed so as to cut the schooner off, and while Mrs. Zane and Mr. Everts and all the police sprang out on deck to see the chase Mr. Bennett threw up a powerful calcium light which he had placed on board the tug for the very purpose now necessary—to illuminate the water far and near so that those he pursued could not escape.

"Let her have every ounce of steam and drive her!" cried the captain to the engineer through the speaking-tube which led from the pilot-house to the engine-room.

The steamer plunged forward for a few seconds under the full pressure.

Bennett shouted to those whom he saw and recognized—Bludge, Volchini and the woman Hayden.

"Surrender! or we shall fire right into you!"

He heard a wild scream from Stella Hayden's lips. What it meant he did not know or have time to think, for at that critical moment when success to his plans seemed more certain than that he would live another second, the deck forward seemed to lift right out of the tug; there was a blinding flash, a fearful shock—then all was darkness.

He knew there was an explosion, but steam came aft in clouds where he stood, and he drew Mr. Everts and his daughter into the cabin to escape the scalding vapour.

As he did so he heard the captain cry out:

"Keep aft, every one—aft to the very stern. The boiler head is blown out and she is bad stove forward. Keep aft or she'll go down under us!"

"Heavens and earth! This is too bad! The schooner will get away!" cried the detective, ignoring all thought of his own danger while duty was on his mind. "Oh, what can be done? She sweeps on in safety while we in the moment of triumph, as I thought, are crippled if not worse."

He rushed forward now, for the captain, cool and brave, had got the tug off before the wind, so that the steam was swept from the bow and not back among those who were on the deck.

"What is the damage?" he cried. "Are we sinking? Is any one hurt?"

"No, sir," said the engineer. "The steam was too much for the plates in the boiler-head. They are started and the boat hurt a little forward but not below the waterline. The engine is crippled. We can make no steam—do nothing but drift or come to an anchor."

"Where is your small boat? I must go for another steamer!" said the energetic officer.

"She is on deck—aft—but too small to stand this sea. You couldn't live in her a minute, much less row ashore."

"What can we do, then? That schooner and the sloop are scudding away."

"I know it, Mr. Bennett, and I repeat that there is no help for it now."

Anna Zane had not uttered a shriek or shown the least excitement while the steamer was in such danger—sinking, for all she knew—and now when Mr. Bennett came aft into the cabin she did not say a word about danger, but only asked:

"Are we not able to keep on in pursuit of the yacht?"

"No, my good lady—our engine is crippled. We are helpless until we can drift to shore where help can be had."

"Oh, it is too bad. Whom did you see on the deck of the yacht?"

"I saw many—some of them bad men. But those we are most interested in just now I recognized in the persons of Bludge, Volchini, and the woman Stella Hayden."

"Don't call her a woman. She is a fiend!"

"You are right, madam; but I never like to take the liberty of changing names given by custom."

"You did not see my husband?"

"No, madam!"

"You do not think they have murdered him?"

"Oh, no, madam, for then their schemes upon his fortune would have a sudden and a bad determination."

"Where do you think he was?"

"Either confined below or so stupid with drugs as not to be cognizant of what was going on on deck."

"That was most likely the case," said Mr. Everts. "You feel confident that he is on board the yacht?"

"Yes, sir, or those who are working for his ruin would not be there."

"Then we will surely capture them and rescue him. It will only be a matter of time. By daylight, if not before, we can secure another steamer."

"Yes, sir, undoubtedly, and renew the chase."

"Heaven help us to succeed," said Mr. Everts, reverently.

Cool, amid the most terrible excitement, while that calcium light illumined every face and form on board the yacht, the young Captain Phorresterre gave his order to the helmsman not to swerve a point from his course, and sang out:

"Run up the squaresail forward!"

The men were in the act of running up this immense sail when the explosion occurred on the steamer which he knew had disabled it, if it had not sunk her. Then he did not see the need of risking the foremost with the tremendous strain which the sail would bring upon it, and he countermanded his order.

He had hardly done so when Stella Hayden approached him:

"Captain, did you see the small sloop close to us, when the light from the steamer enveloped us and it?" she asked.

"I did, madam."

"Where is she now?"

"It is hard to tell. Most likely some way astern. We are very fast, and we have lost no headway."

"Oh, can you not signal to her or in some way communicate with her?"

"No, madam—it would be very imprudent to attempt it. We do not know how far the steam tug has been crippled, or even that she is crippled at all, though we hope so."

"Oh, if you knew why I wish it!"

"Madam, no reason on earth would influence me. Life and liberty are dear to me—they should be to you! I wish to preserve both for the present, at least."

"Captain Phorresterre, on that sloop I saw a being dearer to me than life or liberty. I have seen her but once in four long years, yet I recognized her instantly."

The captain bowed, but made no reply. He had duty to perform.

"Look sharp there, on the port side! Heave the lead and see how much water we're in!" he cried.

Then turning to the helmsman, when the leadman sang out: "Quarter less four," he ordered him to luff three points.

This brought the head of the vessel on a course for the shore, and, as her sheets had to be trimmed in a little, it kept the crew busy for several minutes.

With a look of deep anguish on her face Stella Hayden went below while Volchini and Bludge remained on deck.

"Are you going to bring your music-girl off to-night?" asked Bludge of his companion.

"I am," replied Volchini, "or at least I shall make the trial. I seldom fail in an undertaking of that kind."

"Well, good luck to you. I'm going to try my fortune in the same line. I've a good mind to go for that young and pretty wife of the idiot below."

"It would not do. I have no love or pity for her, but we must look out for him till we get all out of him we can. Stella will not always keep him as he is now. Let him get sober once and our power is gone!"

"Well, but what am I to do for company on the cruise, for it seems we are to take a cruise, maybe a long one? You'll have your Georgina, Phorresterre has his pretty wife for a cabin boy, Stella has her idiot in tow, and I'm left out in the cold."

"A shocking case, truly."

"It's a very hard case."

"Well, for the sake of romance I'll assist you, Mr. Bludge. I happen to know of a little beauty whom you may inveigle in a peculiar way, as she is just now in correspondence with me. I advertised not long since for a young, romantic lady, as a travelling companion to Italy. I did it more for amusement than anything else. I had over a hundred answers. One pleased me much, for she sent her photograph. Here it is. You see she is young and handsome. She is an orphan—orphans are my peculiarity, especially if they have no big brothers. She has a small income

but boards at an hotel on it, because she can live there unquestioned, and she is as independent as any one I ever knew on small means. She might be led to believe that I wait her on the yacht—that I have intended to surprise her by making all preparations unknown to her in haste, and thus induced to come on board with you, my messenger."

"And you consent that I should take the prize."
"Yes, for now my heart is set on Georgina—at least all the heart I have."

"That's well put in. I'll go ashore and try my luck when you go."

The two men went below and Captain Phorretter was left aft, excepting only the man at the wheel.

"Look out sharp for vessels now as we stand in," he cried to the watch forward;

And then he went to the waist and threw the lead.

"Be ready to lower the larboard quarter-boat when I heave to," he said, sharply, a few moments later.

The order was heard below as well as on deck, and in a few moments Bludge and Volchini, well enveloped in cloaks, were on deck.

The next moment the schooner was luffed up in the wind, her jib and foresail hauled down, and her anchor dropped.

Then when she held to her anchor the mainsail was lowered.

The quarter-boat was now dropped from the davits manned, and when Volchini and Bludge stepped into it it was at once rowed ashore.

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

GUILTY.

Old Lady: "You know the 'Royal Oak'?" Well, you turn to the right, past the 'Jolly Gardeners,' till you come to the 'Red Lion'—"

Artful Cobby: "Oh, don't tell me the 'ones, mum! Name some of the churches, and then I shall know where I am!"—[Asks and gets an evasive answer without a murmur.]—Punch.

CHANGE OF HAIR.—A violent shock of fear or grief will, it is said, turn the hair suddenly gray. Query. Does the converse ever occur? Suppose a man's hair has grown gray in consequence of anxiety occasioned by slender and precarious circumstances. If he were unexpectedly to come into the possession of money enough to make him comfortable for life, is it possible that excess of joy might immediately turn his hair dark? Perhaps it would only turn his head without affecting his hair. But, if in a position to be tested on this point, one would not object. What Peabody will try the experiment?—Punch.

RETAIL TRADERS, BEWARE!

Mr. Punch begs to apprise the retail trade that its time has come. Up with all the shutters! Announce sale by auction at any sacrifice. Listen to the *Lancet*:

The fact is that retail trade is gone mad. There are far more shopkeepers than the wants of the public require, and they think themselves entitled to all the luxuries and enjoyments of life. Their wives, glorious in sealin jackets and redundant jewellery, are to be seen everywhere; and the pretensions of the class are becoming a nuisance that it is high time to put down.

Put it down, then—pretensions, class, sealin jackets, and all! *Surgery, Curative!* The *Lancet* and the profession have the matter in their own hands. If every medical man will undertake to exterminate—of course in a regular way—a single streetful of retailers and their families, the business may be done in the twinkling of a peevish and mortal.

Charge for the golden guineas. Upon them with the *Lancet*—Punch.

"PUNCH'S TRIADS."

There are three things which every wise man detests—new boots, an argument, and a barrel-organ. All women like fashion, *petits soirs*, and a bit of scandal.

There are three things which nobody can do without—money, buttons, and the baker.

We all like a compliment, our own way, and a bow from a lord.

The three most desirable things to possess are a sound digestion, a balance at the banker's, and tact. All ministers, Whig, Radical, or Conservative, like a Majority, a Surplus, and "No House."

The three best letters in the alphabet are L S D; the three worst I O U.

Happy the man who can count on having, every day of his life, a mealy potato, some loose silver, and a good laugh.

Avoid three things—wet feet, a bore, and a law-suit.

The Three Per Cents, three courses, and a good three-volume novel, all contribute to human happiness.

There were three Fates, three Furies, and three Graces; and there are still three Lords of the

Treasury, three Vice Chancellors, and three members for Birmingham.

The Greeks had their trilogies, the Romans their triumphs, and we have our threepenny pieces.

There are three things which will always be—jobs, snobs, and smoky chimneys.

Beware of three in the morning, three months' bills, and the three golden balls.

There are three things which everybody is ready to give—their advice, their arm, and their blessing.

Collect information, collect anything, which in a few years will fetch three times as much as you gave for it, and collect yourself.

Life would be tolerable were it not for three things—getting up in the morning, carving, and going to the dentist.

Three things happen to everybody sooner or later—to lose their train, their temper, and their umbrella.—Punch.

THE PRIDE OF BEAUTY.

A GALLANT youth, whose lady-love possessed

The rarest charms to fire the manly breast,

Was so enamoured of the beauteous maid

That to the powers above—below—he prayed

Right fervently, to make her beauty less;

Nay, turn it, if they would, to ugliness,

That so it might be shown his constant flame,

Despite the change, would glow for her the same.

This strange request no sooner Satan heard,

Than, quick as thought, he took him at his word,

And, by such arts as only Satan knows,

The deed was done!—away her beauty goes!

And now before her mirror see her stand,

No more "the fairest lady in the land."

But such a Hecate—such a very fright,

She shrieked aloud and shuddered at the sight,

And Satan laughed!—But still the lover swore

In very sooth he loved her as before!

"Oh, faithful soul!" she said; but little less

The woman mourned her vanished loveliness.

"My beauty gone!" the weeping damsel cried;

"To come to this!—Ah! would that I had died!"

In short, she wept at such a frantic rate

The very fiend took pity on her fate,

And soon was fain her beauty to restore.

And now behold her at her glass once more,

Handsome as Helen when, with radiant charms,

She summoned Paris to her waiting arms;

More beautiful, indeed than in the hour

She knew the demon's disenchanted power;

For, while the fiend called back her former face,

He slyly added many a winning grace.

"And now," she said, "I'm sure you love me more,

Ay, twice as much as e'er you did before!"

"Nay, said the lover, "as I loved no less

When once I saw your beauty in distress—

No more, my sweet, this added grace may claim

Than my whole heart—I love you but the same!"

"Adieu!" she said; "to me it's very clear

Heaven sends us beauty but to make us dear;

And well I see my love was thrown away

On one so dull that he can cooily say,

"Who cares?—not I!—how beautiful you be!"

Handsome or homely—all is one to me!"

S. G. S.

GEMS.

THE moment a man begins to rise above his fellows he becomes a mark for their missiles. It requires more power to control fortune than to control kings.

Good sense should be the judge of both ancient and modern rules; everything that does not conform to it is false.

MANY a true heart that would have come back like the dove to the ark, after its first transgression, has been frightened beyond recall by the savage charity of an unforgiving spirit.

A THREAD can hide a star, a sixpence can hide the view of everything around us, and man with but a little of the fleeting world may blind his mind, harden his heart, and he may lose himself and be cast away at last.

FAITH and will are the two maternal birds which nourish courage and performance; the one gives us confidence in ourselves, the other enables us to secure the confidence of those whom we would conquer or control.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

REMEDIES FOR SORE THROAT AND NASAL CATARRH.—Get a silk ribbon an inch or more wide, tie it about your neck and wear until worn out, and then replace it and continue to do so. Many cases of catarrh are caused by inability of the liver to perform its function properly. In such cases there is often a too alkaline condition of the blood. When this is the case the liver does not take out as much of the carbon and other substances as it should, and

the mucous membrane of the nose becomes a dumping ground for the foul matter. If persons thus afflicted will squeeze the juice of a good-sized lemon into half a tumbler of water and drink it without sugar just before dinner they will if they live hygienically be surprised to see how soon the catarrhal difficulty will diminish. When it fails to do so it may be considered as due to other causes.

DYEING WOOL BLUE.—In this method half-woollen threads are destroyed by muriatic acid; the acid is then neutralized by chalk, and the fabric is well washed and dyed. One hundred pounds require 1 lb. of chromate of potash, 1 lb. sulphate of copper, 5 lbs. alum, 1 lb. crystals of tartar, and 1 lb. oil of vitriol, which are dissolved in the vat, the goods being left in the boiling liquor for half an hour. The goods are then boiled in a fresh bath containing 25 lbs. logwood, to which $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of "shoddy" carmine and a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of resain are added, the liquor being left boiling for another half-hour. The so-called shoddy carmine is prepared by dissolving in hot water 12 lbs. alum, 9 lbs. indigo carmine, and 3 lbs. soluble aniline blue, and stirring until cool. This carmine is very suitable for dyeing ordinary wool.

STATISTICS.

THE value of the iron, wrought and unwrought, exported from the United Kingdom during 1872, was declared to be 36,000,547. In 1871 it was 26,124,134.

A YEAR'S IMPORT OF EGGS.—In the year 1872 upwards of 558 millions of eggs were imported into the United Kingdom from abroad. The average exceeds a million and a half a day; and we paid more than 5,000,000 a day for these foreign eggs imported.

SINCE 1836 about 183,000 patents have been granted by the United States Patent-office. For the year ending September 30, 1872, there were 19,587 applications for patents, of which 13,636 were granted. The fees paid during the year amounted to 700,954 dollars.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PRINCE LEOPOLD OF BAVARIA'S marriage with the Archduchess Gisela of Austria has been fixed for the 24th of April.

LORD DUDLEY has munificently cleared off the debt of the Great Hospital, Dudley, with a cheque for 469l. 3s. 2d.

ELM TREES IN THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON.—Another step in the planting of the streets of Brighton with trees has been taken within the last few days. Two lines of fine young elms (presented by the Earl of Chichester) have been planted on the outer skirts of the central pavement of the Sloyne.

PRINCE ALBERT OF MONACO.—M. Thiers has sent the Cross of the Legion of Honour by an aide-de-camp of the Minister of Marine to Prince Albert of Monaco. During the war his Highness, who was a lieutenant in the royal navy of Spain, offered his services to France, and took part in the campaign of '70 with the French fleet, which, by the way, was never positively engaged with the enemy.

AN IMPERIAL ANECDOTE.—A Paris journal gives the following detail of the late Emperor Napoleon's domestic life at the Tuileries. Every morning his son used to knock at the door of his study. "Who is there?" the Emperor would ask. "It is I, the Prince Imperial, papa," the boy would sometimes answer, or "I, Prince Louis," or some other title. The Emperor, however, would not open his door till his son replied, "Well, then, *destin, Coca!*"

A FAMOUS JOCKEY.—One of the most famous of the jockeys of a past generation has recently died at Newmarket. Latterly, little heard of, James Robinson was one of the most successful in the days when plunging and half-mile races were unknown. He rode six winners of the Derby, nine of the Two Thousand Guineas, and two of the St. Leger. Although several modern jockeys have been credited with a greater number of winning mounts than fell to the lot of the veteran who has just passed away, none can boast of so many victories in the principal contests.

THE JUDGES AND RETIRING PENSIONS.—The dates at which the common-law judges now upon the bench will be entitled to their retiring pensions, after fifteen years of judicial service, are as follow:—Mr. Justice Blackburn and Mr. Justice Keating in 1874, Mr. Justice Mellor in 1876, Mr. Baron Pigott in 1878, Mr. Justice Lush in 1880, Chief Justice Bovill and Chief Baron Kelly in 1881, Mr. Justice Brett and Mr. Baron Cleasby in 1883, Mr. Justice Quain and Mr. Justice Grove in 1886, Mr. Justice Deaman and Mr. Justice Archibald in 1887, Mr. Baron Pollock and Mr. Justice Honyman in 1888, Mr. Baron Martin completed the term necessary to enable him to claim his retiring pension in 1895, Mr. Baron Bramwell in 1870, and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in 1871.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

NEWHAVEN.—Address your communication to the office of the LONDON READER, 334, Strand.

MADRID.—We think you might inquire personally at the London Stereoscopic Company, in Regent Street.

J. L.—You omit to state the words on the medal. If you will supply them we will at once translate them for you.

S. T.—The anatomical term *Thorax* denotes the chest, or that part of an animal body beginning at the neck-bone and ending at the diaphragm.

B. H. R.—The versification is fair and fluent, but the sentiment has been rather used up. Moore for example (vide "Irish Melodies") has almost, if we may venture to say it, done the subject to death.

GILD.—The process is tedious and would require much time and labour and a practical acquaintance with many minute technicalities. It would in the end be infinitely better to send the frames to a glider.

ROBERT S.—You might procure a French copy of the "Wandering Jew" (*Le Juif Errant*) by order of any French bookseller. Of these there are many in the neighbourhood of Soho and Oxford Street.

CHARLES N.—Declined but with our best thanks. The little paper is interesting, but in composition it is somewhat crude. But by practice (supposing that you aspire to write) you would rapidly improve in that department.

AMATOR.—Minims, drachma, etc. You will find the symbols and their significations in an ordinary penny table-book, alongside of Apothecaries' Weight. But we caution you against trying to make up any important prescriptions for yourself.

POMEROY.—1. The lines (particularly the song) not deficient in melody, but too commonplace. 2. Any matrimonial announcement may be sent to the office in the usual manner. 3. We cannot judge of your temper, nor are we acquainted with any deaf poets, though no doubt there have been such. Milton was blind.

P. P. P.—1. Yes, unless the offer of ten shillings per month had been accepted by the creditor. 2. Not without the sanction of the court, which court however would most probably grant its sanction. 3. We should recommend you to try to come to some arrangement rather than incur the many evils attendant on litigation.

A. P. S.—One of the oldest in the world is the church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople. It was erected by Constantine, A.D. 325, enlarged by Theodosius, his son, 338; burnt down 404; rebuilt by Theodosius the Second 415; again burnt Jan. 532; shortly afterwards reconstructed by Justinian. It is built in the form of a Greek cross (like our letter X).

M. A. A.—1. Pay your money into a bank and procure a "Letter of Credit" for Rio Janeiro, where you will find the amount on your arrival in the bank there that corresponds with the English bank, when you can draw it as you may desire. On no account take out money. 2. There is a book on Household Management which would suit your purpose; or of any bookseller. 3. The LONDON READER can be sent post free for 1s. 6d. per quarter.

AMICUS.—The Ancient Order of Foresters claims to be of great antiquity. In 1850 they numbered 80,099 members; in 1864 they had increased to 277,746; their total income amounted to 500,000l. a year, and the London United District alone had an income of 89,000l. In 1855 they held their first gathering at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham; in 1860 the number of members and their friends reached 60,000 at the same place.

WAT TYLER.—1. A Piazza (Italian) is a walk under a roof supported by pillars. Such for example is the piazza in Covent Garden. 2. A Balcony (balcon, French and Rogers, the poet, recommended people to sound the o long) is defined as a projection beyond a wall or building, generally before a window, supported by pillars, and surrounded by banisters or balustrades. 3. A Verandah is a lightly built porch or piazza, used chiefly in cottage architecture.

HETTIE.—1. Simply send your little announcement in the usual course, expressed in the usual manner. See the correspondence column. In about a fortnight or three weeks it would be likely to appear. 2. There is not a single error in the spelling; all is perfectly correct. The writing is neat but capable of improvement and an evidently clever young lady like "Hettie" might by practice soon attain an excellent style of writing. 3. The hair is golden, and we think the little lock really charming. It is the tint which is most fashionable, the tint which is most charming, and the tint (or close upon it) which Titian

loved to paint and which Mr. Ruskin himself has eulogized. It is certainly to be greatly admired, and you are to be complimented as being the fortunate possessor of it.

HELENA V.—1. The colour of the hair is a medium brown; it is silken in texture, and decidedly very pretty. As the owner of such a head of hair you are to be congratulated. 2. Charlotte (French) means "all noble"; the Latin form, we may observe, being *Carolella*, which sounds much more agreeably. Emily is connected with Emma, a name given as of German origin, and meaning a nurse. For Minnie there seems to be no distinct derivation. That name is extremely modern. 3. Not strictly a mechanic: either a tradesman, or, if entirely and especially a workman, then a skilled labourer.

VICTOR VOLANS.—No external remedy would be of avail, as the troublesome eruptions would constantly appear anew. Practise frequent ablutions of the entire body, use a generous diet, and take as much out-door exercise as possible. You would find the following of infinite service—namely taraxacum (extracted from the despised but most useful plant the dandelion) with a few drops of muriatic acid, procurable at any chemist's. Take this thrice daily and with regular perseverance matters will soon mend. We may add that this medicine has the rather rare recommendation of being agreeable to the palate.

E. M. M.—The following account may serve your purpose. Wales is on the Irish Sea with St. George's Channel and Bristol Channel on the South, and it is bounded by the counties of Chester, Salop, Shropshire, and Monmouth. It is about 180 miles long and 60 in mean breadth. It comprehends 12 counties—namely, Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Merionethshire, Montgomeryshire in North Wales; Brecknockshire, Cardiganshire, Caermarthenshire, Glamorganshire, Pembrokeshire, and Radnorshire in South Wales; and contains 751 parishes and 58 market towns. The country is very mountainous, and abounds in iron, copper, lead and coal mines, with quarries of free-stone, slate, &c. Some of its mountains exceed 3,000 feet in height. Snowdon and Fflinlimmon are the most celebrated. It is watered by many rivers, of which the principal are the Dee, Wye, Usk, Conway, Clwyd, and Towy. Corn and the usual agricultural produce of the island are abundant. Its fisheries are good, but its manufactures are not considerable. It has excellent ports and harbours, and a good trade. It returns 29 members to parliament.

MY ALBUM.

'Course I really love Miss Gussie:
Poor Miss Gussie! she loves me.
All men flirt with red-haired Lucy,
Yet Miss Lucy still is free.
Here's loud Kate, a charming coquette;
All men spoon her—so do I:
Got her photo' in my pocket—
Clever spider—thoughtless fly!
Here's Miss May, a playful kitten.
(Nothing pays like honesty)
Once I was a trifle bitten—
Came to nothing—can't think why.)
Here's Miss Florence, a fine brunette,
Full of pretty coquetry;
I played Romeo, and she Juliet
Last night on the balcony.
Here's the heiress! can't be spooned—
Close on forty—dots on me.
Done! she's money! money! money!
Money wins the victory!

B. G. P.

LOO, twenty-eight, medium height, fair complexion, domestic servant, has a little money, and would make a good wife; a mechanic preferred.

DORA, twenty-three, tall, and fair, would make a loving and affectionate wife. Respondent must be about twenty-six, tall, fair, handsome, affectionate, and fond of home.

ISA, eighteen, rather tall, fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, good tempered, and affectionate; a tradesman's daughter. Respondent must be affectionate, cheerful, and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

BESSIE, thirty, about 5ft. dark, good looking, affectionate, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home; a good mechanic preferred.

JON G., twenty, light-brown hair, loving, and would make a good husband. Respondent must be about eighteen, handsome, domesticated, affectionate, and fond of society.

LAURA, twenty-three, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be about twenty-seven, tall, dark complexion, of a loving disposition, and fond of home.

ALFRED, twenty-three, fair, handsome, and loving, would like to correspond with a young lady who is pretty, able to make a home comfortable, fond of home and children.

TOM E., twenty, tall, dark-brown hair, handsome, and of an affectionate nature, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty, pretty, loving, domesticated, he is fond of home.

MARIA, twenty-two, tall, considered pretty, well educated, and fond of home and children. Respondent must be tall, handsome, loving, fond of home, and about her own age; a tradesman preferred.

AMY E., nineteen, dark complexion, dark-brown hair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a tradesman tall, dark, handsome, and fond of home and children.

JULIA M., twenty-three, medium height, dark-brown hair, hazel eyes, dark complexion, in a good position, and accomplished, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about her own age.

CELIA, twenty, light-blue eyes, brown hair, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, well connected, and fond of home amusements.

GEORGE S., twenty-two, 5ft. 6in., dark complexion, handsome, and loving. Respondent must be about twenty-one, pretty, well educated, affectionate, and very fond of home; a miller preferred.

MAY J., nineteen, affectionate, pretty, and would make a good wife to a loving husband. Respondent must be

about twenty-two, dark, handsome, fond of home and children.
MILLY, nineteen, tall, dark, affectionate, domesticated and well educated. Respondent must be about twenty-two, tall, handsome, dark complexion, affectionate, and of a loving disposition.

ALAN W., twenty-eight, medium height, fair, good looking, and domesticated, desires to become acquainted with a respectable young man that would make a good husband, he must be over thirty, tall, and dark; a mechanic preferred.

E. S., forty, thoroughly domesticated, a widow without encumbrance, very fond of home, and could make a thorough good wife, would like to meet with a respectable man about fifty with a view to matrimony.
MICHAEL, twenty, medium height, fair complexion, auburn hair, blue eyes, very affectionate, and fond of home, a tradesman's daughter. Respondent must be fond of home, good tempered, and a teetotaler; a mechanic preferred.

W. J. P., twenty, 5ft. 7in., seaman in the Royal Navy, hazel eyes, black hair, fair complexion, and able to make a woman happy, wishes to correspond with a young woman about the same age, fond of home and children; a domestic servant preferred.

ROSE AND VIOLET. "Rose," twenty, tall, dark, and a good dancer. Respondent must be about twenty-five, fair, tall, handsome, and fond of music and dancing; a mechanic preferred. "Violet," seventeen, medium height, dark curly hair, very affectionate, musical, and has very good expectations. Respondent must be tall, dark, handsome, and able to keep a wife comfortably.

BURTON JACK AND FRANK JIN. "Burton Jack," twenty-four, black curly hair, hazel eyes, short, and dark complexion, would like to correspond with a young woman about nineteen, of a loving disposition, and fond of home. "Flying Jib," twenty-one, tall, black hair, and dark complexion. Respondent must be about eighteen, pretty, loving, and fond of home.

LOUIS AND KATE. "Kate," twenty-two, medium height, dark, domesticated, and fond of children. Respondent must be tall, dark, and fond of home; one in the Navy preferred. "Louise," nineteen, tall, fair, light hair, domesticated, fond of home and children, and is a Good Templar. Respondent must be tall, fair, handsome, and fond of home, must be a Good Templar; a mechanic preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

C. B. is responded to by—"Lonely Lottie." ALFRED by—"Nellie," twenty-one, tall, fair, is very fond of home and children.

BILL by—"Mabel," whose age is the same as his own, tall, light-brown hair, and blue eyes.

GEORGE by—"Mary K.," eighteen, medium height, brown hair, gray eyes, loving and domesticated.

T. H. J. by—"Gertrude," seventeen, tall, and fond of home and children.

ELEANOR by—"Emma," twenty-three, dark-brown hair and eyes.

MAURICE D. by—"Maud," tall, dark, considered handsome, and quite able to keep a home comfortable.

JOSEPH E. by—"Louie," domesticated, fond of home and children, and will make a very affectionate wife.

JAMES Z. S. by—"Annie," thirty, medium height, dark hair, loving, and domesticated.

SINCERITY by—"S. S.," twenty-eight, good looking, rather dark, and holds a good clerkship in London.

A COUNTRY GIRL by—"C. M.," 6ft., dark eyes, light hair, and in the Navy.

HELEN C. by—"Bert D.," eighteen, well connected, and is in a good situation in a warehouse.

JAMES L. by—"Thomas H.," medium height, dark complexion, middle aged, in a good position, and able to keep a wife, loving, and fond of home.

HONESTY by—"Matthew V.," twenty-two, handsome, dark, affectionate, and has an income of 250l. per annum.

JOHNNY E. by—"Charity," of the same age, 4ft. 11in., dark, brown hair and eyes, rather nice looking, and of a loving disposition.

JAMES H. by—"Elizabeth H.," medium height, twenty-five, would make a loving and affectionate wife, and is thoroughly domesticated.

A. B. C. by—"Liz," twenty, tall, dark complexion, of a lively disposition, a good dancer, domesticated, and fond of home.

CHEERFUL GEORGE by—"Jessie N.," twenty, fair, blue eyes, medium height, affectionate, loving, and would make a good wife.

TEDDY J. by—"Bell D.," nineteen, fair, hazel eyes, below the medium height, and of a very cheerful and affectionate disposition.

MERRY WILLIAM by—"Agnes," twenty, blonde, domesticated, fond of society, and would make a loving and true wife.

TED A. S. by—"Hilda," eighteen, 5ft. 3in., very dark; and fond of home, an only daughter and will have some money when of age.

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NOTICE.—Part 118, for MARCH, Now Ready, price 6d.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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